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Tunisian premier to visit Jordan

TUNIS (R) — Tunisian Prime Minister Hamed Karoui is expected to start a three-day visit to Jordan on Sunday for talks on boosting cooperation between the two countries, official Tunisian sources said on Wednesday. Mr. Karoui will chair with his Jordanian counterpart Abdul Karim Kabariti the joint commission for cooperation, they added. Tunisian exports to Jordan dropped sharply to 1.6 million dinars in 1995 from 14.4 million dinars in 1994. Imports from Jordan rose to 5.2 million dinars in 1995 from 4.7 million dinars in 1994. No details were available on why the Tunisian exports to Jordan dropped. Tunisia and Jordan in April last year signed five accords for economic cooperation at the end of the first meeting of the joint commission in Tunis.

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Jordan cautions against cuts in refugee services

Crown Prince calls on donors to address UNRWA deficit

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan on Wednesday warned against any cutbacks in services offered to Palestinian refugees and called on donor countries to plug the budget shortfall faced by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

Addressing a meeting in Amman as a follow-up to a conference held in New York last week where donors pledged \$133 million to the UNRWA budget of \$352 million, the Crown Prince warned of any reduction of services to Palestinian refugees.

"In the case of Jordan...the question of raising the spectre of further social distress (as a result of cutbacks in UNRWA services to refugees) is a red flag, and certainly in the instance of the occupied territories..." he told the meeting.

The impasse in the Middle East peace process, he said, raises "...the dangers of transfer, the dangers of movement of further population from the (Israeli-occupied) territories..."

"We have to have our eyes open to this, so on the one side there is the possibility of the dangers of the cutbacks, whether across the board or selectively, which are extremely worrying to the host and donor countries as well as the possibility of deterioration of further of the appalling situation in the occupied territories," he said.

Following is the text of

the Crown Prince's speech:

Reference should be made to the previous "Extraordinary Meeting of Donors and Host Countries" which was held in Amman, 23rd September, 1996. That meeting aimed at discussing ways and means of bridging the UNRWA budget deficit for 1996. I recall that it managed to meet most of the deficit.

However, I do want to say that in terms of political economy in the five provinces, and in particular in the host countries for Palestinian refugees, the term political economy is no longer taboo at least in the discussions that we have held with the World Bank and international institutions, there is a recognition of the importance of social package; there is a recognition of the importance of social productivity and I am happy to say in this country, that we certainly are true to our objective of non-discriminatory improvement of living conditions and social productivity across the board.

However, as a host country and as a donor country, we continue with the situation of being aware of the budget within a budget.

This meeting today comes as a follow up to the pledging conference that was held last week in New York. The 1997 UNRWA budget is estimated at \$352 million and only \$133 million were pledged. The

Japan contributes \$15m

JAPAN ON Wednesday announced it was contributing \$15 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. The announcement was made by Japanese Ambassador Takayuki Kimura at a meeting in Amman of major donors to UNRWA.

With this new contribution, the Japanese financial contribution to UNRWA for 1996 will reach US\$ 25.7 million; Previous pledges have been \$3.5 million in urgent grant aid and \$7.7 million food aid. (The cumulative Japanese financial contribution to UNRWA will be US\$356 million by the end of this year, a Japanese embassy statement said).

shortfall is very large and indeed alarming. However, I look with some interest at the new activities of the focus of UNRWA activities in general and I would like to say that I am deeply impressed by the contribution of the Gulf countries, the corporate outreach concept and indeed in terms of new donors, I would like to refer in particular to ASEAN.

I hope the meeting of today should be more reflective of the international commitment to the humanitarian duties and responsibilities of the United Nations and indeed more sympathetic to these responsibilities particularly in terms of basic needs of education and medical care to the Palestinian refugees.

The large financial shortfall between what was pledged and the UNRWA budget reality comes at a time when the whole peace process is in jeopardy, when the whole peace process is going very slow-

ly indeed and if we are to speak about peace, we are to speak about the humanitarian concept of peace — the human face of peace. It is the wrong signal that the sponsor, supporters and donors of the peace process would give if unintentionally — possibly, the peoples and authorities of a troubled region felt that UNRWA contacts, whether across the board or in identifying individual countries and communities, were going to characterise the steps ahead. I think that any selectivity in cutbacks would be extremely detrimental to the position of the host and donor countries. In the case of Jordan, I think that the question of raising the spectre of further social distress is a "red flag" and certainly in the instance of the occupied territories, we can only hope and pray that the ongoing impasse of the peace process will be resolved, but clearly the

(Continued on page 7)

King meets Arafat advisor, urges continued, concerted efforts to advance peace process

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday reiterated his call for concerted and intensified efforts by all parties to the Middle East peace talks to push the process forward. He said that efforts should be made to overcome the many obstacles that impede the process and to give momentum to it in order that it can achieve its objectives.

King Hussein was speaking at a meeting with Nabil Amer, an advisor to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Mr. Amer delivered a message to the King from Mr. Arafat dealing with the latest developments in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations concerning the redeployment of Israeli troops from Hebron.

Later on the day, King Hussein and Mr. Arafat discussed the peace process in a telephone call.

Mr. Amer expressed the Palestinian leadership's appreciation of the King's continued backing to the Palestinian people and their rights in their homeland and his efforts to establish peace and stability in the region.

The audience was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Chief of the Royal Court Awn Khasawneh and Ziyad Majali, the director of the Jordanian representative office in Gaza.

Mr. Amer earlier met Mr. Kabariti at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

and the two officials reviewed Jordanian relations in various fields as well as the developments in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

The two sides underlined the need for the quick implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli accords so that the way can be paved for negotiations on

the final settlement.

Mr. Kabariti reiterated Jordan's rejection of Israel's settlement policy and said the expansion of the existing Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories posed a threat to the whole peace process.

In a statement to the press, Mr. Amer lauded coordination between the Palestinian National Authority and Jordan.

"So far we have not made any progress (with Israel) that would enable us to say that we are about to sign a protocol (on Hebron)," he said. "Contacts are underway and there are meetings and consultations with the Americans focusing on unsettled issues. There must be binding commitment also regarding the start of the next step after Hebron like the redeployment in the region under category B, the Gaza airport, the secure passage way and the question of the

detrained Palestinians."

Referring to Israeli settlements, Mr. Amer said: "It is well-known that these settlements pose a main obstacle to peace and a permanent timebomb that could ruin the whole peace process."

He said that the world community can by no means condone the Israeli logic with regard to the settlements especially those in the Jerusalem area.

"There is a clear provision in the U.N. resolutions that there can be no tampering with the negotiations on a final settlement and there should be no change on the ground," Mr. Amer added.

He said that these provisions were respected by the previous government and guaranteed by the United States which sponsors the peace process.

Mr. Majali and Palestine Ambassador to Jordan Omar Khatib were present at the meeting.

King receives conference delegates

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday praised King Hassan of Morocco for his continued support for the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco (AKM) and for the academy's continued activities.

Addressing delegates attending the AKM's meetings in Amman, the King said that he takes pride in the brotherly relations with the Moroccan people and the on-going cooperation between the AKM and the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research (AI al Baith Foundation) of Jordan (see related story on page 3).

Welcoming the delegates at the Royal Court, the King said: "It is a precious opportunity for me to welcome you in your second homeland in this country which takes pride in its affiliation to the Arab nation."

"I appreciate the major achievements you have accomplished through your relentless efforts, and I greet the AKM of Morocco and wish you continued success in your work. I express my deep pride in our brotherly ties and the cooperation with the AI al Baith Foundation. "Your meeting is a chance for the scholars to exchange ideas and consult on matters that would help us all in our endeavours at this stage of our life and in serving the coming generations.

"King Hassan is my elder brother to whom I hope you will convey my gratitude and appreciation for his efforts in establishing and sponsoring the AKM. We wish him continued success in his efforts to serve his country and nation. We support your endeavours and look forward to learning all the details of the research work you have been discussing."

AKM Parliament Secretary General Abdul Latif Barish delivered a reply speech expressing the AKM's appreciation of the hospitality accorded to its members in Amman. He also expressed thanks to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan for his role in support of scholars and

Levy reaffirms commitment to Oslo deals in Tel Aviv talks with Muasher

TEL AVIV (Petra) — Minister of Information Marwan Muasher met Wednesday in Tel Aviv with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and afterwards described the talks as extremely useful stressing that Mr. Levy has reaffirmed the Israeli government's commitment to the implementation of the Oslo accords.

He said Mr. Levy expressed the Israeli government's commitment to implement the agreement on Hebron and other accords reached with the Palestinians.

Dr. Muasher, who was speaking after the one-and-a-half-hour meeting with Mr. Levy, told a press conference that he extended an invitation from Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti to Mr. Levy to visit Jordan and hold talks in order to help find out a solution to the present crisis of the peace process.

"I hope that the agree-

ment on Hebron will be signed soon. I cannot go into details about the Palestinian position but I want to say that the Jordanian position regarding settlements, whether in East Jerusalem or in the rest of the West Bank is very clear: We are against any settlement activity in the West Bank and we feel that this poses a threat to the peace process in general, to the Palestinians and also to Jordan," he said.

"I am very glad that we have had very frank discussion about this point and we will continue work together in order to hopefully solve it."

Dr. Muasher also said that the Golan Heights must return in its entirety to Syrian sovereignty and expressed hope that the Israelis, the Syrians and the Lebanese will resume negotiation as soon as possible.

Dr. Muasher said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent pledge

that the western Jordan Valley will remain under Israeli sovereignty for ever had created a negative atmosphere in the region in general and the West Bank in particular.

He said that Jordan demands that Palestinian sovereignty should be restored over all the occupied Palestinian lands and there must be a positive climate that would be conducive to the conclusion of a final settlement.

He told the press that he visited Israel also in order to conduct talks with the Israeli government over the need for the implementation of all accords including the Israeli agreements and to stress the need for the creation of a positive atmosphere for the Middle East peace process "because we can by no means allow the major achievements of the past five years to be wasted because of the prevailing negative atmosphere."

Deputies complain of delays in replies to queries and raise more questions

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Lower House of Parliament deputies accused the government on Wednesday of ignoring their demands and not paying due attention to their questions and showered the government with more complaints.

At the beginning of a regular House session, parliamentarians, opposition and centrists, said the government's answers to their questions are not "fulfilling" and "come very late." Answers take sometimes months to arrive, they complained.

Islamist Deputy Ahmad Kofahi said that he submitted a written question over the arrest of opposition figure Leith Shbeilat last year but had not received an answer yet. It would be of no use even if he received it now since Mr. Shbeilat was released last month under special pardon from His Majesty the King.

Deputies' complaints centred mainly around price hikes, tourism and problems faced by Jordanian workers in the Gulf.

Centrist Deputy Theib Abdullah said that he addressed his question on

poverty and hunger in Jordan to the government last year and it had become more important now, especially after this year's sharp increase in prices.

"I call on the government to take speedy and right measures to alleviate the suffering of the people," he said.

Centrist Deputy Trad Qudsi spoke of bread and fodder prices and asked the government to have a firsthand look on the situation in the northern badia.

Another complaint was forwarded by centrist Deputy Fawwaz Zoubi, who asked the government whether a newly-received corn shipment was fit for animal consumption.

Minister of Supply Munir Sobar confirmed that all food consignments were being checked and rechecked by the ministry, and the corn consignment was particularly inspected.

Islamist Deputy Suleiman Sa'ad, who forwarded his question to the government last year, said that the government's answer, a year later, was not sufficient.

According to the deputy, more funds should be allocated to Jerash Municipali-

Islamists score rare victory

AMMAN — Islamist opposition in the Lower House of Parliament scored a rare victory on Wednesday when it succeeded in voting down a government recommendation that allows non-Islamist banks to operate under Islamic Sharia law.

The 15-member Islamic Action Front (IAF) bloc aired complaints, and protests when discussions over the amended draft of the banks law started in the Lower House on Wednesday. The draft, presented by the government and discussed by the House's Finance Committee, allowed new licensed banks to function in accordance with Islamic Sharia law if their bylaws were approved by the Central Bank of Jordan.

Islamist deputies, backed by centrist Deputy Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, said that this Central Bank approval

King receives Syrian bishop

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday received at the Royal Court Bishop of Syriac Community in Jordan and the Holy Land Mar Swaryos, who relayed to him a message from Patriarch Zakka I. Attending the meeting was Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh.

Drugs seized, five held

AMMAN (Petra) — Anti-Narcotics Department forces on Wednesday foiled a smuggling attempt and arrested the five people who tried to smuggle 8.350 kilograms of heroin, one kilogramme of cocaine, 25 kilogrammes of hashish worth at JD 700,000. The narcotics were hidden in body belts.

Palestinian couple convicted of Israeli embassy bombing

LONDON (AFP) — A British educated Palestinian man and woman were convicted Wednesday of setting off car bombs that damaged the Israeli embassy and a Jewish charity center here in July 1994. Jawad Borneh and Samar Alami were convicted in the Old Bailey of bombing, and plotting to bomb, Jewish targets in Britain in a bid to sabotage the Middle East peace process. Sentencing was set for next Monday. A third defendant, Mahmoud Abu Wardah, was acquitted and released. Earlier in the trial, Nadia Zekra, a mother of two originally accused of planting the embassy bomb, was ruled not guilty by the judge after evidence against her was found flawed.

2 Israelis killed in W. Bank

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — An Israeli woman died Wednesday in an attack by unknown assailant, but suspected Palestinian, earlier in the day which killed her 12-year-old son and wounded five other family members, medical sources said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu immediately sent a "very tough" message to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat over the first deadly attack on Israeli civilians in five months, Israel Radio reported.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack but the Israeli army clamped a closure on the nearby Palestinian self-ruled town of Ramallah. Police said witnesses reported that three Pales-

Arafat slams Israeli plans for Ras Al Amud building

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said Wednesday that an unprecedented Israeli plan to build Jewish homes in the heart of an Arab neighbourhood in Arab East Jerusalem was a serious violation of Israeli-Palestinian agreements.

"It is a very serious breach to what had been agreed upon," Mr. Arafat told reporters in Gaza City.

Mr. Arafat said that under signed peace accords, "not one single house should be added to any settlement" in the occupied territories.

Mr. Arafat was responding to a decision by the interior ministry's planning and construction commission Tuesday authorising

construction of 132 homes for Israelis in East Jerusalem's Ras Al Amud neighbourhood, where 11,000 Palestinians live.

They would be the first homes built explicitly for Jews in the middle of Arab East Jerusalem.

The commission decision must receive final approval but the minister charged with ruling on the matter, Eli Yishai of the ultra-orthodox Shas Party, has said he will first consult with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Israeli press reports Wednesday said U.S. officials had asked Mr. Netanyahu to refrain from

(Continued on page 7)

Iraq starts oil exports; dispute over Scud parts is deadlocked

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's first oil exports in six years reached their buyer in Turkey on Wednesday, and the government announced rations of flour, sugar and other supplies would increase with the limited easing of the U.N. trade embargo.

However, a U.N. weapons inspector in Baghdad was rebuffed in efforts to get missile parts released for inspection, part of the requirement for lifting the sanctions altogether.

The oil, moving from Iraq to neighbouring Turkey through a pipeline, is the first export under a U.N.-monitored programme permitting limited sales to fund food and medicine purchases. The weapon monitoring and compensation for Gulf war victims.

Ahmet bulca, a technical director with Turkey's state-owned pipeline company, Botas, said Iraqi oil reached Turkey at 3:15 p.m. (1315 GMT). Iraq is pumping oil

through the pipeline at a rate of 350,000 barrels per day and will increase the flow to 440,000 barrels per day next week, Mr. Bulca said. Demet sentaci, a chemical engineer who conducted the quality test for the oil, said it was of "very high quality."

The United Nations on Tuesday approved the first oil contract, the sale of 75,000 barrels a day to Turkey's state-owned oil company. Iraq is negotiating with companies from the United States, Russia, Austria, the Philippines and Bulgaria, said Saddam Zibin, general director of Iraq's oil marketing agency.

Before the United Nations imposed international trade sanctions banning Iraqi oil exports as punishment for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, Iraq was pumping 3.2 million barrels a day.

The "oil-for-food" deal allows Iraq to

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Israel sets up jail camp for illegal foreign workers

RAMLE, Israel (AP) — Faced with 200,000 illegal foreign workers, Israel has begun rounding them up in a tent prison camp to await deportation, officials said Wednesday.

Israeli newspapers ran front-page pictures of inmates staring through a barbed wire fence at the compound at Ayalon prison in Ramle, some 25 kilometres east of Tel Aviv. Although access was denied to reporters Wednesday, the nine khaki and green tents, surrounded by barbed wire and guard watchtowers, was visible from the roof of a tall industrial building overlooking the prison walls.

Dressed in civilian clothes, the inmates sullenly milled around, some shivering in cold weather. The establishment of the camp reflected Israel's growing frustration with the unwanted influx.

The government estimates that there are 300,000 foreign workers from Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South America in Israel, two-thirds of whom have overstayed visas and are here illegally.

The first wave came three years ago as contract labourers replacing Palestinians. As Israel's economy grew, others came as tourists and stayed illegally to work as nannies

and housecleaners. Now many are bringing their families, and some neighbourhoods have been virtually taken over by the foreigners.

Interior ministry spokesman Tova Elinson said that Israel has issued 1,850 deportation orders this year and the numbers are rising. Most were for citizens of former communist countries, the majority of them Romanians. But officials have argued that the deportations were being held up because there was no place to put the workers after they were caught.

Labour Minister Eli Yishai first proposed rounding up unauthorized workers into camps last month, but the idea initially drew protest from Israelis for whom such references conjured up images of the Holocaust.

Prison authority spokesman Moshe Malool told the Associated Press that the jail camp, established 10 days ago, was a "great solution" and it was "reasonable to assume" use of such facilities would be expanded.

So far, he said, 76 foreigners have been locked up at the one-acre compound inside the maximum-security prison. Many of the foreigners charge that Israel is treating

them unfairly.

Radi Ion, a 37-year-old construction worker from Craiova, Romania, complained that his employer rarely paid the foreign contract workers in full or on time. "We are treated like slaves," said Mr. Ion, who was interviewed recently in Tel Aviv.

"The whole system is illegal and inhuman," said Hannah Zohar, who heads a labour lobby called "a hand for the worker."

She said that many contract workers are authorised to work only for one employer, and their visas become invalid even if they left that employer for a valid reason like unpaid salaries.

"Many of these workers haven't been paid for months and are forced to leave their employers. Then we declare them illegal and send police squads to round them up and jail them," Ms. Zohar said.

Police refused to discuss the issue Wednesday.

"We are not interested in talking about the subject," said a police spokeswoman, speaking anonymously. "We are not giving (reporters) access to the foreign workers because the people responsible feel that it will not bring any good to the image of the state."

Iraqi oil starts flowing but hopes should not soar high

By Natasha Bukhari
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — While Iraqi President Saddam Hussein Tuesday pressed a button that may save the lives of thousands of Iraqi infants that die from starvation in the embargoed country every month, Saddam needs to do much more than that to free his people and country from the yoke of the sanctions which have nearly crippled Iraq for the past six years.

Although U.N. Resolution 986, which allows Baghdad to sell \$2 billion worth of oil every six months to buy badly needed medicine and food supplies, offers a breathing space for the suffering Iraqis, Baghdad is still far from seeing a total end of the embargo which the U.N. slammed on Iraq for invading Kuwait in 1990.

Iraqis fired weapons in the air, danced and sang with joy as Iraqi oil supposedly began flowing through Turkey from wells and installations in the Kirkuk region. But while the euphoria for the Iraqis is quite understandable (as the oil-for-food deal might save about 4,500 infants from dying each month for lack of food and medicine, according to U.N. relief workers), Baghdad cannot yet rest assured that the long road to its full rehabilitation to the international community has been shortened.

The 1986 agreement, according to Iraq's staunchest opponent, the U.S., "did not signal an end or even the first step towards the end of the sanctions against Iraq, against Saddam Hussein's regime."

This reminder by the State Department spokesman Glyn Davis quickly put a damper on some euphoric reactions by European parties.

Hailing 986 as "the largest humanitarian operation ever launched by the United Nations," Italian Security Council President Francesco Paolo Fulci was quoted as saying that "more than twenty million innocent Iraqi civilians will be finally saved from starvation and untold suffering." But even those calling for ending the suffering of the Iraqis realise that Baghdad has to take legal and political measures that gives it a clean bill of health for a total lifting of the sanctions.

Legally, the U.N. embargo can only be lifted after Iraq complies with all U.N. resolutions that were termed as prerequisites for lifting sanctions.

Politically, however, Iraq has to take steps that would have to reassure its neighbours that it no longer poses a threat to any party. At least this is what Jordanian officials have been stating publicly.

Iraq has to fulfill commitments that should be met by countercommitments by the international community, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and Information

Minister Marwan Muasher have said, explaining that Baghdad should change its political rhetoric and reach a point of responsibility whereby neighbouring countries and the world can be convinced that the Saddam regime no longer poses a threat to anyone.

This, Jordanian officials say, has not yet been done. "There is an international political position that Iraq has to respond to... So far, we have not seen anything and the hoped-for rehabilitation of Iraq has not succeeded," Mr. Kabariti told Reuters during his visit to the United Arab Emirates last week.

Iraq, according to head of the U.N. Special Commission for the disarmament of Iraq (UNSCOM) Rolf Ekeus, continues to prevent U.N. inspectors from removing banned Scud missile parts like the ones fired on Saudi Arabia and Israel during the 1991 Gulf war.

Back on the legal front, President Hussein has maintained his defiant attitude regarding adhering to other U.N. resolutions and as such remains vulnerable to U.S. and Gulf pressure. Western diplomats say, citing as evidence Saddam's disregard to a no-fly zone in northern and southern Iraq in a sign of protest against flights by a U.S.-led air force over its territory.

A two-way bickering in August, when the U.S. insisted on patrolling Iraqi skies and Baghdad continued to defy warnings from the U.S. against challenging the no-fly zone, led an American attack on Iraqi bases and threatened a wider military confrontation between the two sides.

On the political front, Saddam is still biding on to what Western diplomats term as "aggressive language" that can lose him support from otherwise potential sympathisers. His continued warnings of military confrontations if Iraq's sovereignty is threatened and his insistence on verbally attacking "enemies" mars the Iraqi president's credibility where his regime's rehabilitation is concerned, the Western diplomats maintain.

However, officials and diplomats agree that sanctions against Baghdad have to be lifted eventually as Iraq has been and should go back to being a vital party in the region's economic and political structure.

For this to be realised, however, Iraq has to come up with a new political discourse which entails a peaceful language and a willingness to partake in the region's peace process, Jordanian officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, have said.

But the Jordanian and Amman-based diplomats warn against over-enthusiasm of a speedy change, as, they point out, the language that sometimes emanates from Baghdad is still somewhat "irrational and totally unpredictable."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bethlehem has no money for holidays

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus and "Christmas capital of the world," does not have enough cash to celebrate the holidays this year, Mayor Elias Freij said on Wednesday. "We need a total \$100,000 to decorate the city and help the poor and prepare for the celebrations," Mr. Freij told AFP. "The city is very poor and we have not received aid from any source." Mr. Freij said he has been promised money from the Palestinian National Authority for the celebrations. But only "two-thirds of what I had hoped," he said. "Bethlehem is the Christmas capital of the world. But so far from churches abroad we have received nothing. I am very disappointed. Why are the world's churches ignoring Bethlehem?" he said. The mayor said unemployment in the city had reached 40 per cent, largely due to an Israeli closure of the West Bank which has hurt Bethlehem's main industry, tourism. Clashes between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian rioters on the outskirts of Jerusalem, part of violence across the territories which left 86 dead in late September, also briefly choked off the flow of tourists to the city.

Saudi Arabia refuses to drop boycott of Israel — report

CAIRO (AP) — Despite U.S. pressure, Saudi Arabia has reportedly refused to drop its boycott of Israel. The Clinton administration has pledged to block the admission of Saudi Arabia to the World Trade Organisation until it abandons its participation in the Arab economic boycott. But the Saudi-owned Al Hayat newspaper quoted unnamed Saudi officials on Wednesday as saying the kingdom will not drop the embargo. The move would represent a setback to U.S. attempts to end Israel's longstanding isolation in the region. Arab countries imposed the trade embargo on Israel shortly after it was established in 1948 in an attempt to undermine its economy. It has achieved only limited success. After agreements with Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians, the United States has tried to persuade other Arabs to drop the embargo and open, at a minimum, trade relations with Israel. Arab states, such as Saudi Arabia, have insisted the embargo be completely lifted only after a comprehensive settlement with Israel.

Paris, Doha to strike defence deal

PARIS (AFP) — France and Qatar are set to strike a deal on French military equipment for the Gulf state, officials said after a meeting between President Jacques Chirac and Emir Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani. France hopes to help Qatar modernise its defence capability, in particular in terms of its air and naval forces. France has already provided about 80 per cent of the Gulf state's defence equipment.

Gulf Air flight makes emergency landing

MANAMA (AFP) — A Gulf Air flight carrying Egyptian journalists borne from a Gulf Arab summit in Qatar made an emergency landing in Bahrain after a crack appeared in the cockpit window, an airline official said Wednesday. The plane landed at Bahrain International Airport on Tuesday after the pilot noticed the crack, but travelled on to Cairo after technicians replaced the window, a Gulf Air official told AFP. The Egyptian journalists were covering the Gulf Cooperation Council summit from Saturday through Monday in the Qatari capital Doha. Gulf Air belongs to Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the Abu Dhabi emirate in the United Arab Emirates.

Israel's orthodox and reform Jews clash over doughnuts

TEL AVIV (AP) — There was much ado about doughnuts in Israel Tuesday, when a former chief rabbi reportedly ruled that it is forbidden to eat pastries distributed by the country's small reform Jewish movement.

The controversy flared after reform Jews began distributing "sufganiot" — jelly doughnuts traditionally eaten during the Hanukkah holiday — to soldiers at army bases this week.

In the past, only orthodox

groups like the Habad movement distributed doughnuts to soldiers, said an army spokeswoman, speaking on condition of anonymity. But this year both were allowed to bring them to the gates of army bases, she said.

Habad itself encountered opposition Tuesday when it tried to distribute doughnuts at the Knesset. Opposition legislators — recalling Habad's strong support for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the May elections — considered the

move a veiled political statement and tried in vain to prevent the distribution.

The doughnut war escalated later Tuesday, with television and radio reports on a doughnut-related ruling by Mordechai Eliahu, a former chief rabbi of Israel.

According to the reports, Rabbi Eliahu issued a ruling saying that according to the Halakha — or Jewish law — Jews must avoid eating reform-produced doughnuts for fear that they were "the work of goyim" — a derogatory term for

non-Jews.

Rabbi Eliahu could not be reached for confirmation.

Reform leaders were livid.

"This ruling is ridiculous and (Eliahu) is making of himself — and worse, of the Halakha — a bad joke," reform Rabbi David "Beyond that, he is continuing to cause a rift, hatred and agitation among the people."

About a fifth of Israel's 4.7 million Jews are observant, most of them orthodox. The reform movement

— which is strong among U.S. Jews — is tiny in Israel, but nevertheless has the support of many in the secular Jewish majority.

Orthodox Judaism — which has a monopoly over marriage and divorce issues among Jews in Israel — has been fighting for years to prevent the reform from gaining greater recognition. Their efforts escalated in the wake of the strong performance by orthodox religious parties in Israel's May election.

Northwest Airlines Arrives in Amman Joins KLM To Offer Travelers A Global-Route Network

Travelers from Amman will enjoy unparalleled airline access to cities around the world with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and Northwest Airlines new service agreement from Amman.

Travelers are able to buy a single ticket from Amman to anywhere in the world the KLM and Northwest route system encompasses, including more than 380 cities in North America, Europe, Asia, South America, Africa, Australia and the Middle East.

No other airline system in the world can provide passengers with the travel options available through KLM and Northwest. said Mr. Sherif Fathi the KLM Regional Manager for Jordan, West Bank and Iraq.

Passengers can purchase a KLM or Northwest ticket from Amman to any city served by either airline under the arrangement, called a code-share agreement. Passengers receive boarding passes for all flights, through check-in of baggage and many other advantages.

The code-share arrangement utilizes the fleets and routes of both airlines. For example, passengers buying a KLM ticket from Amman to Orlando, Florida would travel from Amman to Amsterdam via KLM's existing service, connect to KLM's and Northwest's joint non-stop service to Detroit and then connect to Northwest's non-stop service to Orlando.

"Traveling on the KLM-Northwest system is much smoother than hassling with combinations

of other airlines because our system is integrated specifically with the needs of international travelers in mind," said Mr. Ray Nishihira, Northwest Manager for Middle East and South Asia.

Northwest and KLM have coordinated their schedules to provide Amman passengers with quick connections to destinations beyond Northwest's and KLM's various US hubs.

Passengers from Amman will benefit from KLM's flying Dutchman free travel program of which Northwest is a full participant. Travelers can earn and redeem awards on flights to 380 cities served by either Northwest and KLM worldwide. Passengers also earn miles by staying at hotels, renting cars and using telephone calling cards.

Northwest is the world's fourth largest airline and with its Northwest Airlink regional airline partners serves more than 240 cities in the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, Europe and Asia.

KLM serves over 145 cities in Europe, Asia, North America, South America, Africa, the Middle East and Australia. Together KLM and Northwest comprise the world's third-largest airline system.

For further information please contact your travel agent or KLM on 655267.



JORDAN TELEVISION Tel. 773111-19

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23:59 Tarantula

PRAYER TIMES

04:58 Fajr
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17:59 Isha

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Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

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Home News

Queen to open contemporary Indonesian art exhibition

By Mahmoud I. Mufti
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Her Majesty Queen Noor today will open a contemporary Indonesian art exhibition entitled "From Script to Abstraction," at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Jabal Weibdeh.

Explaining the event's background, HRH Princess Wijdan Ali, President of the Royal Society of Fine Arts, said that the exhibition is being organized by the Royal Society in cooperation with the Jordanian Ministry of Culture and the Indonesian Ministry of Higher Education.

The exhibits, on display until December 12, comprise 60 pieces of 10 leading Indonesian artists, representing a diverse spectrum of modern artistic schools.

The Princess added that "this endeavour represents the beginning of cultural interchange between the two brotherly countries. The Royal Society of Fine Arts has been invited to organise a Jordanian art exhibition in Indonesia next year, to include 60 artworks from the permanent collection of the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts. These will be displayed alongside works from the permanent collection of the Indonesian Art Museum, which include art exhibits from several developing countries as well as Malaysian Art."

Princess Wijdan affirmed that the permanent collection of the Jordan National Gallery includes not only contemporary Jordanian, Arab and Islamic art, but also work from many Western countries.

Under a cultural-interchange agreement signed by the Princess and a representative of the government of Indonesia, the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts will be granted 10 of the exhibition pieces. The style of the paintings ranges from abstract expressionism, symbolism, poetic surrealism, etc., involving multi-media, diverse textures and imagery of totem symbols.

Conference participants express dismay over stall of peace process negotiations

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A strong condemnation of the hard-line policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a strong appeal for renewed momentum regarding the Middle East peace process emerged as the leitmotifs of the second day of the Amman meeting of the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco (AKM).

Criticising Israel as the main party responsible for the current stall in the Middle East peace negotiations, an international assembly of distinguished academics and politicians cited the U.S. as the key player in reactivating the peace process.

"The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the assumption of power, in Israel, by the most conservative and relentless political groups are severely hindering the peace process," Maurice Druon said Wednesday.

An intellectual elite convened here for the AKM autumn meeting entitled — "And what if the peace process fails?" — and the common mood was concern, if not pessimism, over the future of a regional peace.

Opening the three-day meeting and summing up the general feeling, HRH Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday maintained: "We are all gathering here with long faces."

"Let's wait for the storm to pass and remain faithful to our hopes," Mr. Druon stated in a seemingly discouraged conclusion.

"The cause of the delay in the peace process was not the opening of the famous tunnel in Jerusalem, but the assumption of power by (Israeli) the right wing," said AKM member Georges Mathé, concluding that "there is no chance that this rightist government and the PLO can find a solution to the key issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict."

Analysing and evaluating the role of the international guarantors, many speakers agreed that the U.N. has never been anything more than a mere observer to the peace process.

On the other hand, many papers presented during the symposium stressed the different aspirations and historic traditions dividing the European Union (EU) member states and seemed to acknowledge an economic, rather than political, influence of the EU in the Middle East.

In this vein, many speakers appeared to determine the U.S. as the most qualified eligible player to reactivate the peace process.

"Europe plays and will continue to play an important economic role," Mr. Mathé said, "[however] only the American administration can assume an essential role."

"The U.S. cannot turn a blind eye to this dangerous situation," admonished meeting Director Abu Bakr Kadin during Tuesday's opening session.

More than 20 papers focusing on all aspects of the peace process as well as scenarios regarding the possible failure of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations were presented during the conference, hosted here by the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research at AL Bait Foundation.

From the Vatican, Cardinal Bernardin Gantin explained the Holy See's stand vis-à-vis the issue of the future status of Jerusalem.

Presenting a paper entitled "The Holy See and the Middle East Peace Process," Cardinal Gantin stated "the Holy See demands that the problem of Jerusalem be tackled by the two peoples most directly concerned," (the Israelis and the Palestinians) and declared that, according to His Holiness Pope John Paul II, "there will not be a durable peace without a solution to the Jerusalem issue."

The Jordanian delegation to the conference consists of Senator and former Prime Minister Zeid Rifai, Senator and former Minister of Information Jawad Anani, and Senator and former Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber.

Mr. Rifai addressed Tuesday's session with a report concerning "The present grassroots of peace including territorial data and Security Council resolutions; land in exchange for peace."

Dr. Anani yesterday lectured on "The Arab economy in case of the failure of the peace process," while Dr. Abu Jaber is scheduled to address this morning's session.

The conference will close today subsequent to presentations by the former Egyptian Minister of Youth and Information Ahmed Kamal Abu Majd, international expert on water, Idris Dahak, and Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) former Director General Abdelbadi Boutaleb.

Middle East undergoing crisis — minister

JAKARTA (Petra) — Jordan's delegate to an Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting has drawn attention to Israeli illegal practices in the occupied Palestinian territories as well as the Jewish state's reneging on peace agreement commitments.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Khalid Madadha Wednesday addressed the assembly, stating that the Middle East is undergoing a major crisis as a result of Israel's non-abdication to the peace accords.

He also said that the Israeli government has maintained a complete blockade on the occupied territories, resumed Jewish settlement programmes on confiscated land and has been tampering with the sanctity of holy places in Jerusalem, all of which are in defiance of U.N. resolutions as well as respect for the Muslim world.

"Jordan is demanding that Israel comply with peace accords signed with the Palestinians and resume negotiations with Lebanon and Syria over a permanent and comprehensive settlement on the basis of U.N. resolutions regarding the exchange of land for peace," the minister stressed.

"To conform with the Jordan-Israel 1994 peace treaty and the resolution of the recent Cairo Arab summit, Jordan is pursuing efforts and maintaining intensive diplomatic contacts aimed at pressuring the Israeli government to respect its commitments and agreements with Arab parties," Mr. Madadha added.

He affirmed that the Kingdom calls on the co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States and Russia, to shoulder responsibilities and ensure the implementation of U.N. resolutions as well as the provisions of the peace accords.



Japanese Ambassador Takayuki Kimura and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti at a reception they hosted on the occasion of the birthday of Emperor Akihito (Petra photo)

Cairo meeting endorses equal treatment for women

CAIRO (J.T.) — A Cairo meeting of ministers of social affairs from various Arab countries has unanimously endorsed a pan-Arab document concerning women, which had last summer been ratified by an Arab women's conference in Amman. Minister of Social Development Hamad Abu Jamous announced Wednesday.

Addressing the assembly on the conclusion of the week-long meeting, Mr. Abu Jamous stated that the Arab document addresses women's issues particular to the Arab world, calls for equal treatment of women and focuses on issues of interest to Arab women such as poverty reduction and increasing high level participation.

The minister, who headed the Jordanian delegation in the meeting, stated that he submitted a memorandum to the Arab ministers requesting that a proper mechanism be found for the implementation of the Amman conference resolutions and recommendations, adding that these were in line with those passed by the World Conference on Women which convened last year in Beijing.

The meeting in Cairo reviewed the contents of the document which focused attention on three dimensions: stemming poverty, the status of the family in society and the involvement of women in decision-making in social, economic and political issues, he said.

Describing the meeting as successful, Mr. Abu Jamous noted that the ministers touched on other subjects such as combating drug addiction in Arab countries.

Prepared by an assembly working under the auspices of the Arab League, the document also focuses on the various regional and international developments of the past four decades and their general impact on women.

Man scheduled for execution today

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 22-year-old man, convicted of molesting and murdering a child in Ghor Safi last year is scheduled to be executed today at Swaga prison, raising the number of 1996 executions in the Kingdom to nine.

Mohammad Na'el Darwish Majdalawi was convicted by the Amman Criminal Court on June 30, of molesting and then strangling one-year-old Hussein Ahmad Heisban at a farm in Ghor Safi on Sept. 30, 1995.

Court documents said that on Sept. 27, Majdalawi, who was attending a wedding party, took the boy to a deserted area and sexually abused him.

Three days later, Majdalawi met the boy on the street, lured him to a farm and attempted to molest him again, court transcripts said.

"Hussein started struggling and screaming and told Majdalawi that he was going to recount to his family what Majdalawi was doing to him," the court documents said, quoting Majdalawi's confession in front of the prosecution.

Hassan tried to escape but the man went after him and strangled the boy with a piece of cloth and then buried him, transcripts said.

In his confession to the authorities, Majdalawi stated that he killed the child to conceal his crime as he had threatened to tell his family about both incidents.

Hussein's body was discovered three days later by the farm owner, after his family filed a missing person report.

According to judicial sources, the execution procedure at Swaga prison consists of placing the person to be executed in solitary confinement in preparation for the execution.

The prisoner is informed that he will be executed a few hours before the sentence is carried out.

"Prisoners are not informed of their execution, however when they are placed in isolation they [tend to] reach the inevitable conclusion," he said.

Majdalawi is scheduled to be the second man to be executed within 48 hours.

On dawn Tuesday, a 26-year-old man was executed at Swaga prison after he was convicted of killing a 65-year-old woman in Jabal Jofeh in April of 1995.

A total of 23 people have been sentenced to death by the Criminal Court since January of 1996. Last year, eight people were executed in Jordan for various crimes.

HUDD to organise two-day seminar

AMMAN (Petra) — The Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) is organising a two-day symposium this month to discuss a restructuring of the housing sector in Jordan, as called for by the Council of Ministers earlier this year.

HUDD Director General Yousef Hiyasat confirmed that the Dec 15-16 meeting is to be attended by representatives of various organisations affiliated with the housing sector. According to one portion of the cabinet decision, a firm owned and operated jointly by the public and private sectors will be formed to build homes for low-income strata.

Currently, the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment is working in conjunction with the Amman Municipality in preparing amendments to the building code and the city planning regulations as applied in Jordan, Mr. Hiyasat stated, adding that the amendments are designed to modernise regulations governing home construction in line with the new cabinet decision.

He said that the symposium will tackle challenges facing the housing sector in Jordan and will also cover housing project investments as well as the requirements of housing estates in Jordan between 1996 and 2000. Mr. Hiyasat said that participants will also discuss legislation governing regulations for buildings, the Landlord and Tenants Law and its potential effects on housing projects.

He confirmed that 120 participants, representing more than 50 institutions, will discuss these topics in 10 papers.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

- "Tintin et le Temple du Soleil" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday at 4:00 p.m.
- "Raphael: Legend and Legacy" (pt. 1) (with commentary in Arabic by Adnan Al Shafat) at Darat Al Fann, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.
- "A Charlie Brown Christmas" on Thursday at the American Centre at 5:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS PLAY

- "The Star of Hope" at the Church of the Redeemer, Jabal Amman, First Circle on Saturday and Sunday Dec. 14, 15 at 7:30 p.m. (Tel. 615790).

CHRISTMAS SHOW

- Special show and sale of Christmas crafts at the Jordan Crafts Centre (Alaydi), Jabal Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 644555), until Dec. 31.

EXHIBITIONS/SALE

- Exhibition/Sale of antiques, crafts, old engravings, photographs, old maps and cartography of Jerusalem and the Holy Land at Um Al Kundum, Airport Road, off the Arabian Horse Club every Friday (11:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.)

EXHIBITIONS

- Water colour works by Jabbar Mijbil entitled "Declared Hunches" at Orfali Art Gallery, Ummu Uthaina, until Dec. 25.
- Works by Spanish painter Clara Amado at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman (until 15 Jan.).
- Works by ten contemporary Indonesian artists entitled "From Scripts to Abstraction" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (open daily except Tuesdays), until Jan. 12.
- Painting exhibition by Hind Nasser at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre/Artisana, Jabal Amman (Tel. 647858), until Jan. 10. Also displaying a regular exhibition of arts and crafts and Christmas items.
- Display of Christmas gift items at the Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman (Tel. 658696) until Jan. 2.
- Works by Rula Al Shagairi at Darat Al Fann, Jabal Weibdeh, until Jan. 4. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists.
- Paintings and wall sculpture by American artist Susanna Caldwell at Al Baydar, Khirbat Abu Jaber (Tel. 737556), until Dec. 14.
- Plastic art week activities at the Royal Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 24.
- Graphics by computer exhibition by Ismail Shanmout at Abdal Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 24.

Share the warmth of Christmas with the little ones who need it most.

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Serbian students stage 24th day of mass protest

BELGRADE (Agencies) — Several thousand students gathered in central Belgrade Wednesday for yet another day of street protests in what has become a daily routine of demonstrations against Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

Student leaders said they expected some 40,000 students to join the protest march which they said would take them past the Yugoslav Federal Parliament. On Tuesday the assembly held its first session since disputed municipal elections in Belgrade on Nov. 17 which the opposition says it won.

The Zajedno (Together) Coalition of opposition parties boycotted the session, accusing the parliament of rubber-stamping Socialist vote fraud.

The opposition's legal and administrative options against the reversal of their initially-reported election victory were exhausted Tuesday when the Yugoslav Supreme Court refused to hear their appeal.

Zajedno, whose own daily protest march was due to start later Wednesday, has asked for Western support in its bid to force Mr. Milosevic into accepting defeat and said it was count-

ing on crucial trade union support for its campaign.

Metalworkers at eight factories in Serbia downed tools Wednesday, lending their support to more than three weeks of anti-government protests.

The trade unionists were still not present in the numbers hoped by the organisers.

"Members of our union are on strike in metal factories in Serbia," Milan Nikolic of the Nezavisnost (Independence) Union told AFP. "They request payment of their late salaries, but also a recognition of a basic human right — the right to choose representatives (to negotiate) with the authorities," he said.

The union, which claims 400,000 members, has announced strikes in eight factories in Serbia's main industrial centres. Workers downed tools in six factories in Belgrade, one in the southern city of Nis and one in Mladenovac, 50 kilometres south of here.

"If they take away our right to vote we'll also lose the right to work or to live," said Mr. Nikolic, who heads the union's metalworkers branch.

However the workers, technically unemployed for

several months because of Serbia's crumbling economy, have largely preferred to stay outside the protest movement.

Many who are receiving a token allowance are afraid of losing that if they participate in a strike.

A Nezavisnost spokesman told AFP that police had "threatened striking workers and prevented journalists from seeing the extent of the strike."

The U.S. and other Western governments have backed the opposition, cautioning against the use of force and supporting their calls for the Socialists to recognise Zajedno's win.

President Bill Clinton criticised Serbian President Milosevic Tuesday for having cancelled local elections, saying that "the voice of the people should be heard."

Asked at a White House event if he had anything to say to Mr. Milosevic, Mr. Clinton replied: "That elections should be respected and that the voice of the people should be heard and that the human, political and civil rights of the people should be respected."

"Neither we nor anyone else would seek to interfere in the internal events of

Serbia," Mr. Clinton said after naming Evelyn Lieberman, his deputy chief of staff, to head the voice of America government-run radio broadcaster.

"But our sympathies are always with free people who are struggling to express their freedom and want to have the integrity of their elections respected," he added.

NATO Tuesday "Strongly deplored" the Serbian government's cancellation of local election results last month and called on President Milosevic to reverse the decision.

"We are dismayed that the Serbian authorities have ignored the calls of the international community to respect internationally recognised democratic principles," the 16 NATO members said in a statement.

The statement, issued shortly after the start of a two-day meeting of NATO foreign ministers, also praised the restraint of the Serbian opposition, which has mounted peaceful mass protests against Mr. Milosevic's decision.

"We commend the opposition for its adherence to non-violence and call upon the government to avoid any use of force against the peaceful protesters," it said.



Protesters display three-fingers, the Serbian Orthodox sign, during protest in Belgrade centre Tuesday. Serbian opposition parties boycotted the Yugoslav parliament Tuesday, vowing to stay away until Serbia's President Milosevic admitted he cheated them of local elections victories last month (Reuters photo)

Zairean troops reportedly join rebels

KAMPALA (AFP) — Zairean troops who have fled to Uganda say that around 300 soldiers have defected to join rebels controlling much of eastern Zaire, the Ugandan government-owned new vision newspaper reported Wednesday.

The daily said that about 100 armed Zairean soldiers had crossed the border into the Bundibugyo district and were camping four kilometres inside Uganda.

They were planning to hand over their arms to the rebels, the newspaper said.

It quoted one as saying: "We don't have a central command; we have not heard from our bosses in Kinshasa for three years," adding that they had not been paid for months.

The soldiers who had joined the rebels included a colonel and three captains, the newspaper said.

A Zairean rebel who talked to Ugandan journalists in the Zairean border town of Kasindi, said his colleagues had killed 16 Ugandan rebels in the area and that others were hiding in the forests of Mwiribi, 30 kilometres inside Zaire.

"Definitely, we shall follow them to Mwiribi. We don't want problems in our country," he said.

The Ugandan rebels, a mixture of fundamentalist Muslim Tablighs and the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda, crossed the border into western Uganda on Nov. 13 and battled army troops for five days before being repulsed.

The troops pursued them across the border after they shelled a border post.

The Ugandan government said its troops went no further than Kasindi, three kilometres inside Zaire, but the Zairean government accused them of capturing the town of Beni, 40 kilometres from the border.

Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame was meanwhile due to visit Uganda Wednesday for talks with President Yoweri Museveni. State House announced.

Meanwhile, Zairean rebels who have seized a swathe of territory in the east of the country admitted Wednesday they had met resistance from Rwandan Hutu militia fighters and former army troops near the town of Goma.

The rebels' security chief, Paul Kabongo, told AFP it amounted to "a pocket of resistance" about 50 kilometres west of Goma, which is controlled by the mainly Tutsi guerrillas.

"They are lost in the forest," he said of the militia fighters and soldiers, without going into detail.

Sources in Goma, quoting witnesses, said Tuesday that clashes have been going on in that area for the past several days.

Such resistance would cast doubt on the Zairean rebel forces' claims to have taken full control of a wide area running along Zaire's eastern border and hundreds of kilometres to the west.

The mainly Tutsi rebel forces, who are aiming at

the overthrow of Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko, swept across the border area taking a string of towns since fighting broke out in October.

Mr. Kabongo also ruled out negotiating with Mr. Mobutu, who is reportedly planning to return soon to Zaire from France.

"We will never negotiate," he said Wednesday. "Mobutu's return has been announced for the last four months and he never comes. His return would change nothing."

Mr. Mobutu's special advisor Honore Ngbanda Ko Atume said on national radio Tuesday that the president, who has been convalescing in southern France since November following surgery for prostate cancer, would return to Zaire "at the beginning of next week."

Mr. Ngbanda said Mr. Mobutu, who had initially planned to remain in France until January, would "return to the country at the start of the week via Kinshasa, to look at the situation which is worsening in eastern Zaire."

Mr. Ngbanda reiterated that Mobutu had no plans for negotiations, saying "one does not negotiate with rebels who take up arms against the country."

He said the country's territorial integrity was "not negotiable," adding that Mr. Mobutu, as "guarantor ... of that integrity had judged that his presence in the country is essential."

Over 1,000 killed in Burundi — U.N.

GENEVA (AFP) — More than 1,000 people were massacred in Burundi in just one month, most of them civilians killed by the Tutsi-dominated army, top U.N. human rights official Jose Ayala Lasso said Wednesday.

The U.N. high commissioner for human rights said the killings took place from late October to late November.

"The human rights situation in November can be described as alarming with its wave of massacres, arbitrary arrests, looting and destruction of property," the agency's human rights observers said in a monthly report.

Both the Tutsi-dominated army and rebels of the Hutu ethnic majority carried out killings, but the vast majority were by the armed forces, it added.

Burundi has torn by ethnic fighting for the past three years in a war that has claimed some 150,000 lives.

The rights observers said the latest killings were in part to blame on rising tensions caused by the return of tens of thousands of Hutu refugees from Zaire, after mainly Tutsi rebels launched an insurrection in the east of the neighbouring country in October.

The massacres also occurred as international attention was mainly focused on the developments in Zaire and the mass return to Rwanda of more than 600,000 refugees, observers added.

Ayala Lasso called for an end to the killings and urged the international community to come up with funds to increase the number of rights observers from nine to 20 by the end of the month.

"I am deeply disturbed by the deteriorating human rights situation in Burundi. I appeal to the authorities and to all parties to assure maximum respect for all rights and fundamental freedoms and put an end to killings, arbitrary arrests and destruction of property," he said.

"Trends in the general situation ... became singularly worse in the month of November," the 19-page U.N. report pointed out.

Rebel incursions had increasingly become full-scale battles with the army in the provinces of Kanyanza, Bururi, Cibitoke, Gitega, Ruyigi and the rural region around the capital Bujumbura, the team found.

Rebels used mortars to attack the armed forces, which responded with air raids and murderous reprisal attacks on the ground against civilians.

The Burundian authorities were also forcing people to leave their hillside homes and farms for camps. Those who refused to comply or abandon their fields were considered to be rebels.

The worst massacre, already reported by the United Nations, took place at Murambi in Cibitoke province, where the army slaughtered between 298 and 435 people in a church on Oct. 22 after they had been repatriated from Zaire.

The following day, a military aircraft strafed the market at Kavyirama in rural Bujumbura.

U.N. observers also accused the army of killing 123 people at Rumonge in Bururi province on Oct. 31. Between Nov. 2 and 4, about 100 people were said to have been massacred at Githeta in Gitega province, including 12 victims who were Bayonetted.

Among the biggest massacres blamed on the Hutu rebels, the report mentioned the murder of about 40 people between Nov. 6 and 10 in Bururi province and of 32 others at a displaced persons' camp at Matongo in Kanyanza province, on Nov. 17.

French police round up Muslim extremists after train bombing

PARIS (R) — French police swooped on suspected Muslim militants Tuesday, rounding up 15 people in dawn raids across Paris a week after the bombing of a city train which killed four people.

But all but two of the suspects were freed later in the day, France Info Radio said.

Police and counter-espionage officers searched buildings housing Muslims in Paris and the suburbs on orders from anti-terrorism magistrates. The magistrates were investigating earlier bombings claimed by Algerian Muslim extremists that last year killed eight people and injured more than 160.

Police said the swoops were not directly linked to last Tuesday's attack at the capital's Port-Royal Station though investigators believe it too was carried out by fundamentalist guerrillas angry over French backing for Algeria.

Investigators said the raids targeted a network allegedly run by Ahmed Zaoui, former European leader of Algeria's Islamic Armed Group (GIA), who was given a suspended four-year jail sentence by a Belgian court in November 1995.

Roland Jacquard, head of the International Observatory of Terrorism, said Tuesday's raids seemed partly aimed at tracking down

people with links to Ali Touchent, one of the main Algerian suspects in last year's bombings, who remained free.

"France has again been hit by terrorism...The French people will once again remain calm and show courage and solidarity," President Jacques Chirac told a national human rights watchdog.

"We will not let certain groups enslave souls and destroy free choice by hiding behind freedom of faith," he said.

Searches were carried out in the essence department south of Paris, where a 13 kilogrammes gas canister similar to that used in the train bombing was detonated in Saint-Maurice Montcoulonne three weeks ago, shattering a roadman's shed in what may have been a test of the device.

The French weekly Le Canard Enchaîné reported that two bombs had been discovered and defused in the port of Nice, southern France, on the same day as the Port-Royal attack. It said judicial authorities were keeping the discovery secret.

Law enforcement sources told Reuters they were on the trail of a suspected fundamentalist network operating in the Nice area but that the two devices found in the city's port were believed to be unrelated to the Paris

train bombing.

In Paris, some of the 34 Muslim fundamentalists who went on trial Monday accused of supporting Moroccan guerrillas denounced the meo they are charged with backing — Mohamed "Saïd" Zinedine and Abdelilah "Rachid" Ziyad.

"Saïd had ordered a pact with God. We had to promise not to go back, to go forward until death. If someone went back, the others were supposed to shoot him," testified Tarek Falah, 22, who has admitted taking part in the killing of two Spanish tourists in Marrakech in August 1994.

"I was only a puppet," said Tarek's brother Rachid, 30. "My brother Tarek was hypnotised by Saïd who never let him go. He had found cannon-fodder."

Investigators believe the Paris train bomb which killed four may have been timed to protest against the trial.

No one has claimed responsibility for the rush-hour train bombing, in which four people died and another 92 were injured.

Mr. Chirac, in a letter of condolence to Moroccan King Hassan after Moroccan student Younes Nait-Slimane became the fourth victim of the train blast Monday, pledged "to fight terrorism, this plague which threatens democracy."

Sri Lankan Tamil attack leaves 58 dead

COLOMBO (AFP) — Tamil Tigers attacked a military base in eastern Sri Lanka Wednesday, sparking fierce fighting that left at least 58 dead on both sides, officials said.

Hundreds of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas launched the assault on the Pulkunawa camp of the elite police Special Task Force (STF), defence officials said.

The pre-dawn offensive ended a two-month lull in the separatist war.

"Reinforcements have gone to the area and re-established the camp," a military spokesman said. "We are now in the process of clearing the immediate vicinity of the camp."

Defence sources said 36 security personnel, a volunteer para-military home guard and a civilian employee were killed, and 39 personnel wounded.

Military intercepts of guerrilla radio communications indicated that they lost at least 20 fighters in the pre-dawn offensive, the sources said.

However, there was no immediate word from the LTTE about the attack.

Defence officials said the Tigers had escaped with an artillery gun, automatic weapons and ammunition and three vehicles belonging to the security forces, the sources said.

"Terrorists also have suffered casualties," the Defence Ministry said in a brief one-paragraph statement.

Officials said ground and air units have already mounted a major search and destroy operation to bomb suspected tiger positions deep inside the neighbouring jungles.

The Pulkunawa camp provided security to a vital high way that leads to the town of Ampara and was also meant to check guerrilla movements between the neighbouring districts of Batticaloa and Ampara.

Wednesday's attack ended a two-month lull in major confrontations between security forces and Tamil Tiger guerrillas.

In September, heavy fighting

erupted in the northern town of Kilinochchi as troops moved to capture the area from the LTTE in an eight-day long battle that claimed nearly 1,000 lives on both sides.

The LTTE carried out an identical attack against the Pulkunawa camp, located on the border of coastal Ampara and Batticaloa districts, on April 5 and killed 18 STF commandos for the loss an equal number of their men.

Officials said the military suffered the latest reversal despite a red alert for possible rebel attacks against military targets in the island's east following a fragile peace in other areas of the island's north-east.

"Particularly the north was quiet, probably because the Tigers were mulling their cadres for an attack like this," a military source here said.

The attack also came as Tamil Tiger guerrillas Tuesday said they lost a woman suicide cadre in an attempt to devastate a strategic naval base in Trincomalee.

China refuses to renounce force against Taiwan

WASHINGTON (R) — In a blunt speech to U.S. military officers, Chinese Defence Minister Chi Haoguan said Tuesday that China refuses to renounce the use of force to reclaim Taiwan, which Beijing considers a rogue province.

"We hope to see a peaceful settlement, yet we refuse to renounce the use of force," the visiting minister told officers at the military's National Defence University. He said the Beijing government would "not sit idly by" and allow Taiwan leaders continue "convinced" to split China.

Chi's statement was not new, but his comments on a visit to improve U.S.-China relations emphasised the importance that Communist China gives to reclaiming democratic Taiwan.

The United States, under the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué, recognises Beijing as the sole government of China, but maintains unofficial relations with Taiwan and continues to sell arms to the island located off China.

Chi urged Washington, which earlier this year dispatched two aircraft carriers to the region and accused China of trying to influence Taiwan's presidential elections with a show of military force in the Taiwan Strait, to let Beijing and Taipei settle their differences without interference.

"The Taiwan authorities have, in disregard of the overall interests of the Chinese nation, gone further and further down the road of conspiring at, and participating in, activities aimed at splitting the motherland, which cause tensions in cross-strait relations," Chi said.

"I would like to point out here that if those elements on (the) island, who are eager to see China dismembered and themselves become more important with foreign support, should cling to their wrong cause and slip further astray, the Chinese government and people will not sit idly by."

Chi is beginning a two-week visit to the United States, which was postponed earlier this year because of U.S.-China tensions over Taiwan.

He held talks with President Bill Clinton and Defence Secretary William Perry Monday.

Burma junta tells embassies Suu Kyi could capitalise on unrest

RANGOON (AFP) — Aung San Suu Kyi remained confined to her home Wednesday as the Burma junta told embassies that the pro-democrat leader might take advantage of the continuing student demonstrations.

Medical students staged demonstrations in downtown Rangoon and a northern suburb Wednesday, as authorities maintained a tight grip on the city, with an area of several square kilometres (miles) sealed off around the main University Campus.

Police prevented bystanders gathering to watch a group of 80 students who congregated in front of the Institute of Medicine, as they had done the previous day, reasserting their demand for a union and chanting "we want our freedom and human rights."

Witnesses said that in the satellite town of North Okkalapa, several hundred students protested in front of their campus, while a diplomat confirmed there was a minor demonstration in the northern city of Mandalay involving 50 students.

Earlier Wednesday, embassies in Rangoon received a ministry of foreign affairs statement that authorities had requested Aung San Suu Kyi stay inside her compound "for her own safety until the situation returns to normal."

"Since it is likely that she may try and take advantage of the situation and that some international media may be misled by her claims, the true fact is that

the authorities have asked for her cooperation in true sincerity," it said.

Ms. Suu Kyi, the National League for Democracy (NLD) leader, has denied any connection with the current demonstrations — the most defiant anti-government protests since the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) took power after crushing a pro-democracy movement in 1988.

The Nobel Peace laureate, who was released from six years of house arrest in July last year, says restrictions on her movement constitute unlawful confinement.

The NLD leader can ask the authorities to bring party members to meetings at her house, but she has not left the compound herself since Saturday.

Student protesters maintain that their demonstrations are non-political, and customarily chant the name of the late Burmese independence hero and father of the armed forces, Aung San, and not his daughter Aung San Suu Kyi.

They said they are facing mounting problems in grouping together because of stringent security around Rangoon and growing pressure to return home after the suspension of classes Monday.

Their education institutions remain officially open, but students have been requested to submit a leave application for two weeks.

Parents and families face repercussions such as the withdrawal of business licenses if their children are

caught demonstrating, said students, who fear government infiltration of their ranks.

An witness to a protest by pupils from a technical college Tuesday said people were leading riot police as they tried to track down fleeing demonstrators down side streets.

The government statement, dated Dec. 9, said the authorities "have exercised maximum restraint" in "resolving" demonstrations across Rangoon — which have on several occasions been dispersed with force by riot police.

On Saturday, security forces used fire hoses, hurled stones and made a baton charge to break up the most daring demonstration to date, when authorities reported that 264 protesters were picked up and later released.

"What commenced as an activity of some students has taken a new dimension due to the involvement of outside political forces," read the statement.

It said there was clear evidence of the involvement of NLD members and "illegal organisations" such as the Burmese Communist Party and the All Burma Students Democratic Front — a group established by students who fled into exile in 1988.

The statement offered no evidence to support the claims.

Sources close to the students said that some 50 people held a brief demonstration in front of the U.S. embassy Tuesday night, but officials on duty there reported no incident.

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Police remove pro-democracy politicians Emily Lau and Andrew Cheng (bottom) after they lay on the ground in protest against China's methods of choosing Hong Kong's post-colonial leader Wednesday. Up to 40 pro-democracy activists scuffled with police outside where the Chinese-appointed committee voted on who would be the first post-colonial leader of the territory (Reuters photo)

Tycoon chosen Hong Kong post-handover leader

HONG KONG (R) — Shipping magnate Tung Chee-hwa swept effortlessly to a historic victory Wednesday in the poll to select Hong Kong's post-colonial leader. Up to 40 pro-democracy activists scuffled with police outside where the Chinese-appointed committee voted on who would be the first post-colonial leader of the territory (Reuters photo).

Mr. Tung collected 320 votes. His nearest rival, former Chief Justice Yang Ti Liang, took only 42. The third contender, businessman Peter Wan, polled 36, and three votes were spoiled.

Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten congratulated the man who will succeed him when more than 150 years of British colonial rule passes into the history books next year.

Mr. Patten pledged assistance in the months ahead as Mr. Tung begins to assemble the team that will take over when Britain hands its last Asian outpost to China at midnight next June 30.

When July 1 dawns, the red flag of China will flutter over the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, a quasi-autonomous territory that China has promised can maintain its capitalist freedoms for 50 years.

"I wish Tung every success in his endeavor and I have congratulated him personally," Mr. Patten said of Mr. Tung, who resigned from Mr. Patten's inner cabinet of advisers to contest the post.

Taipei also added its voice to a long string of congratulatory messages that flowed in from overseas.

The two defeated contenders were quick to offer their congratulations to Mr. Tung, a reclusive tycoon who valued his privacy but will no longer be able to habitually drive himself to functions and take taxis to his office.

Mr. Tung's personal assistant, Stanley Shen, said bodyguards would be assigned permanently from now on.

Tung was due to depart later Wednesday for Shenzhen, a Chinese special economic zone across the border from Hong Kong, where he was expected to receive China's official blessing as Hong Kong's chief executive-designate.

Algerian Muslim extremists kill 20

ALGIERS (AFP) — Muslim extremist gunmen attacked a bus in northern Algeria at dawn Wednesday, killing 20 people and wounding seven, security services said.

The attack happened in the Blida region about 50 kilometers south of Algiers at 3:00 a.m. (0200 GMT), they said in a statement.

Rescue and civil protection services, together with security personnel, rushed to the area to help the wounded, the statement said.

The statement did not say whether the bus was machine-gunned or stopped at a roadblock. It also did not specify where the bus was coming from or where it was headed.

Islamic fundamentalists at war with the secular authorities often use the practice of setting up roadblocks like those of the security forces to ambush vehicles and kill their passengers.

The incident came one day after extremists killed five men and three women from a single family in the village of Bouinan in the same region, which is a centre of militant fundamentalist activity.

According to press reports Wednesday, around 15 attackers slit the throats of four of the family members, including two people in their eighties.

The cries of the victims alerted members of the village's self-defence group and the attackers, afraid of being caught, shot and killed four more people before fleeing.

Tajik government, rebels sign new truce

KHOSHTDEKH, Afghanistan (AFP) — Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov and Islamic rebel leader Said Abdullah Nuri signed a new ceasefire accord Wednesday after holding peace talks in northern Afghanistan.

The ceasefire will take effect from midnight (1900 GMT) Wednesday, the two leaders told reporters.

The accord called a halt to all fighting in war-ravaged Tajikistan, where Islamic guerrillas have been battling government troops since Rakhmonov's non-Communist forces toppled an Islamic-democratic coalition in December 1992.

Both sides first agreed to a ceasefire in September 1994, but the truce was often violated and repeatedly renewed. The last ceasefire was due to expire at the end of this month.

Sources in the Tajik capital Dushanbe, quoted by ITAR-TASS news agency, reported fighting Wednesday in the Garm region, some 200 kilometres east of Dushanbe. The rebels seized the town early this month.

Nuri and Rakhmonov began their informal talks Tuesday, and agreed to hold official negotiations "without preconditions" in Moscow on Dec. 19. They met at Khoshtdek, about 150 kilometres from the Tajik-Afghan border.

Austrian chancellor condemns bomb attack

VIENNA (R) — Chancellor Franz Vranitzky Tuesday condemned a fresh letter bomb attack in Austria as an assault on democracy but a former Vienna mayor blamed the government for failing to do enough to hunt down the bombers.

Police said they suspected a shadowy racist guerrilla group was behind the latest letter bomb, which exploded Monday without causing injury.

"The government condemns this latest attack in the strongest possible terms," Mr. Vranitzky told reporters after a weekly cabinet meeting. "It will not shake our commitment to democracy."

The letter bomb was addressed to the widowed step-mother of Interior Minister Caspar Eizen, a senior member of Mr. Vranitzky's ruling Social Democratic Party.

Bomb squad police Chief Robert Sturm said the bomb bore all the hallmarks of the Bajuvarian Liberation Army (BLA), which has claimed responsibility for five series of letter bomb attacks since it began its campaign in December 1993.

The group also said it planted a hooby-trapped bomb which killed four gypsy men in southeast Austria last year.

"The bomb that exploded Monday, addressed to Loite Ingrisch, seems without doubt to have come from the Bajuvarian Liberation Army," Chief Sturm told Austrian radio.

Many of the packages have been intercepted by police but more than half have exploded, injuring targeted foreigners or people linked with immigrant causes in Austria and Germany.

Russia willing to discuss proposed charter with NATO

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov said Wednesday that Russia was willing to discuss a proposed charter on relations with NATO but remained dead-set against the alliance taking in former Soviet satellites as members.

"We continue to be against NATO enlargement," Mr. Primakov told a press conference after meeting with foreign ministers from NATO's 16 members.

He called the expansion "unacceptable" saying it would create new divisions on a continent still trying to heal the wounds of the cold war.

The talks here were called to explore possibilities for a NATO-proposed charter spelling out security relations between Moscow and the alliance.

Mr. Primakov said he was willing to discuss this idea, saying it "paved the way for very constructive negotiations", but insisted it must be long on specifics.

"It is a document that must contain not just general principles but also concrete arrangements," he said.

Mr. Primakov avoided using the term "charter," as proposed by NATO, because NATO wants a more binding document in the form of a treaty.

A NATO offer to create a formal mechanism for consultation with Russia has been on the table since May 1995. But Moscow has persistently refused to enter discussions in this, fearful that such a move might be interpreted as tacit acceptance of NATO enlargement.

The foreign ministers Tuesday formally authorised NATO Secretary General Javier Solana to launch discussions on the charter with Russia after setting a date of July 8-9 for a summit at which it will name the first Central

European countries to be invited to join.

To ease Russia's objections, the alliance said Tuesday it has no intention of stationing nuclear weapons in any new member states.

Mr. Primakov responded to this Wednesday by saying Russia remained opposed to the deployment of any NATO military infrastructure near its borders.

On enlargement, Mr. Primakov said Russia's opposition was "not simply an opinion of the Russian government, but is founded on the firm belief that this will lead to a new division of Europe. That is unacceptable."

"The security of Europe must be indivisible," he added.

Mr. Solana told the same

press conference that NATO wanted to open talks soon on reaching a charter with Russia, and expressed hope that such a document will be ready at the summit next year.

He said NATO wanted "a solid partnership" with Russia, insisting that Russia was essential to European security.

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher Wednesday hailed as "very good news" Russia's agreement to start talks with NATO on a future relationship and said Russian fears about NATO expansion could be resolved over time.

"Today (we had) very good news that the Russian foreign minister agreed to commence discussions with NATO looking forward to a

document of some kind, a charter," Mr. Christopher told reporters.

Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov said earlier that "There is no need to have enlargement re-divide Europe. On the contrary, enlargement can lead to the full integration of Europe," Mr. Christopher said during a NATO foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels.

"If a charter can be worked out between Russia and NATO, that will complete the integration of Europe, so we're started down the road of a unified, integrated Europe," he added.

"I think that over time the Russian fears can be dissolved as we go into these intensive negotiations with them for a special relationship between Russia and NATO."

Mr. Christopher said Wednesday most East European countries support U.S. proposals for the creation of the Atlantic Partnership Council, a new forum for consultation with NATO.

"The alliance will work with you to create the Atlantic Partnership Council, that would replace NACC (the North Atlantic Cooperation Council)," Mr. Christopher told a meeting between NATO and East European countries.

NACC is a forum for consultations between NATO and some 30 neutral and East European countries which was created in 1991.

"The Atlantic Partnership Council will be the collective voice of the Partnership For Peace," Mr. Christopher said, adding that he was "pleased that so many members of the NACC have expressed their support for this idea."

The Partnership For Peace programme offers states outside NATO closer cooperation with the Atlantic alliance, but stops short of full membership.

U.S., Russia fail to agree on missile dispute

BRUSSELS (R) — The United States and Russia failed to agree Tuesday on a proposed pact on defence against short-range ballistic missiles and decided to have experts work on the problem.

State department spokesman Nicholas Burns reported no progress at a meeting in Brussels between U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, which was dedicated in part to the issue.

The two nuclear powers have been negotiating since last year to try to define which systems are permitted by the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty and announced in September they had agreed on a definition for lower-speed systems.

However a planned signing ceremony in Geneva in October fell through at the last moment. Russia said it wanted to see more progress on a part two agreement, relating to higher-speed systems, before signing part one.

"I can't say that we narrowed the gap in that disagreement at all today. Both sides... Essentially put forward their own views," Mr. Burns said.

"So what they did agree to do... is to ask our expert-level negotiators to get together again to see if they can clarify his disagreement."

He gave no details of when or where the experts would meet.

At the heart of the dispute lies a Russian fear, dating back to the star wars era of the 1980s, that the United States will deploy a missile defence system that will make redundant the ABM treaty, seen by Moscow as a cornerstone of arms control.

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Repeating the message

THE CURRENT visit to Israel by Minister of Information Marwan Muasher has a unique sense of urgency because it comes after several warnings by His Majesty King Hussein that Israel's foot-dragging in the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks will push the entire region to the edge of precipice unless the situation was rectified. The King has been voicing concern and anxiety at the rapid deterioration in the peace process. He has repeatedly sounded the alarm about what could happen if Israel does not honour the agreements which it had signed with the Palestinians and continues to adopt intransigent policies that contradict the principles upon which the peace process was launched.

In a wide-ranging interview with Israel's Channel 2 TV Monday, the King expressed the view that the current policies of the hardline Israeli government of Benjamin Netanyahu were "endangering the peace process." It is not only the stand-off on Hebron that worries Jordan. As His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said Monday at the opening session of a conference entitled "And what if the peace process fails?" the resolution of the Hebron issue is not an end in itself but one step in the quest for a comprehensive peace.

Dr. Muasher will attempt to drive home a clear message to the Israelis: that Jordan vehemently opposes their settlement policy because it not only violates the peace accords with the Palestinians but also because it poses a direct threat to the security and stability of Jordan as well. Israel must understand that any change on the ground in the West Bank would have dire implication for this country and the rest of neighbouring Arab states.

Jordan is trying so hard to make Israel understand that peace has to be comprehensive if it is to last. Building peace after decades of hostility is a difficult task that cannot succeed unless people on both sides of the divide trust each other. The actions of the Israeli government are not just jeopardising all that has been achieved in peace negotiations. They are playing into the hands of extremists and giving credence to the views that Israel cannot be trusted.

That is not an atmosphere that can lead to peace. For the sake of the whole region and its people, the Israeli government has to understand that before it is too late.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i Wednesday expressed hope that the Iraqi-Jordanian relations, which witnessed their golden age with the start of the 1980s when the Iraq-Iran war was raging, will reemerge, in yet a better form, at the turn of the century. Fahed Faneek said Jordan stood firm by Iraq in its war with Iran, when other Arab regimes preferred to curry favour to the Khomeini regime and to give support to Iran. In the second Gulf war, Jordan, which did not back Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and called for the withdrawal of its troops from the emirate, stood firm against foreign intervention in the Gulf and demanded that the problem settled within the Arab framework, recalled the writer. But Jordanian-Iraqi relations turned sour when Hussein Kamel defected to Jordan which, at the time, gave him sanctuary, said the writer. However, he said, political relations were fortunately isolated and separated from economic matters, something which enabled Iraq and Jordan to maintain close cooperation in trade with mutual benefits. Referring to the Iraqi foreign and trade ministers' recent visits to Amman and their meetings with the King and the prime minister, the writer said this development marks the resumption of strong bilateral ties and a harbinger of a renewed golden era in brotherly relations.

A WRITER for the weekly Al Sabeel criticised the government's decision to grant governors and senior government officials a 50 per cent allowance, while depriving the small civil servants of any raise to their limited income. Samih Maaitah also criticised the government for lifting the subsidy on animal feed, thus endangering the livelihoods of many Jordanian farmers and sheep breeders who, he said, are already poor and needy. If the present government is determined to carry out an austerity programme to save public funds in order to offer more help to the needy, it must refrain from being extravagant in salaries to the governors and other favoured civil servants, he suggested. Why should, for instance, a newly appointed female television news caster be offered JD 900 monthly salary when the majority of government employees live below the poverty line, he asked. He said that an austerity programme and rationalisation of consumption spending should be applied to all government employees and all employees so that the public can see justice is done. Economic reform programmes, he said, do not mean that the needy must suffer more, rather that imbalances and faulty decisions must be corrected.

The View from Academia

ICET world assembly — an opportunity which should not slip by

NEXT WEEK (December 16-21), Jordan will host a significant educational gathering, the 43rd World Assembly of the International Council on Education for Teaching (ICET). The assembly is expected to be opened and addressed by His Majesty King Hussein: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan will preside over as chairman and will give a keynote lecture, known as the "Frank Klassen Lecture."

The gathering, which will focus on the important theme of "Teacher Education and School Reform," will be a precious opportunity for Jordan to reflect seriously (more seriously than at present) on the status of teachers and schools in the Kingdom (both in the public and private sectors) and speed up the process of upgrading teachers' performance and improving the quality of school environment.

ICET, as it defines itself, is "an international professional association of representatives from universities, colleges, ministries of education, educational associations, business, industry, and commerce." It dedicates itself, "conscientiously," to "the improvement of professional education through research, programme development, professional exchanges, and international cooperation." It is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) "in official consultative status with UNESCO, and is incorporated in the United States as a non-profit organisation."

Founded in Oxford, England, in 1953, ICET's activities are administered now by an executive office located outside of Washington, D.C., U.S. ICET conducts an annual world assembly as a forum for the worldwide educational community on matters related to national development and teacher education. Last year's assembly was held in Turkey.

On the Jordanian side, the assembly is hosted, prepared and organised by a national committee headed by the minister of higher education and comprising the minister of education, the presidents of the Hashemite University and University of Jordan, the president of the National Centre for Human Resources Development and a number of Jordanian education officials and academics.

The focus of discussion, as has just been prefaced, will be "Teacher Education and School Reform." Under this umbrella, the following four topics will be particularly highlighted in the deliberations:

1. Enhancing values in school reform: Papers will be presented about the promotion of democratic values and practices at schools, the development of democratic pedagogical methods, the orientation of school personnel towards planned change and the enhancement of teaching/learning effectiveness.
2. Fostering partnerships in school reform: Researchers will debate partnership relations between schools and universities, between professional and public schools, and between centres of educational development and public schools.
3. Preparing teachers for school reform: Participants will

exchange views on pre-service and in-service teacher education and the likely impact of such education on schools. They will also discuss the role of teachers' commitment, empowerment and reflection on the educational process.

4. Capitalising on international collaboration for school reform: The conferees will focus on the identification of national, regional, and international efforts for achieving school reform and the enhancement of international networking and collaborative research and development strategies of systemic reform.

Over 400 participants from Jordan, the region, and the world will take part in the sessions. They are academicians, researchers, teachers, representatives of educational institutions and education officials.

What does this conference mean to Jordan? Let's put aside the obvious, i.e. that the choice of Jordan as the location for this international event is a testimony to the Kingdom's importance not only regionally but worldwide, that ICET's insistence on having His Majesty and the Crown Prince take part in this event is a strong evidence of the international community's recognition of the Jordanian leadership's vital role in the support of education, that such a gathering will expose Jordan to international attention (through media coverage) for a whole week, that the participants from abroad (many of whom are visiting Jordan for the first time) will get the chance to see Jordan first-hand, that the event may be classified as what one may call "academic tourism," etc.

In addition to all this, Jordan is likely (if it handles things well) to gain the following benefits:

1. To subject its educational system to scrutiny and appraisal. Since Jordan will take an active part in the conference not only as a host country but also (through more than 20 paper presenters) as an actual participant, it must have already conducted extensive, objective and factual studies about the status quo of its teachers and schools at this point in history, taking note of the developments and successes as well as the gaps and weaknesses. Such studies must be brought to the attention of decision makers in Jordan to look into, study seriously, and act upon.

We know, of course, that Jordan's educational system has been subject to revision, reform and change from the very beginning. We also know that in 1989, the Kingdom held a significant conference on educational reform and came up with a ten-year reform plan. We also know that the Jordanian system of education is one of the most dynamic, progressive and reliable in the region as well as internationally. However, the holding of the ICET world assembly is a golden opportunity for Jordan to pause a little and see where it stands with respect to educational reform. Besides, no system of education is perfect, and countries are expected to continually revise, reform and change. Which elicits the question: What must precisely be done, to which the following point might answer:

2. To compare notes with other participating countries. There are many participants, as has just been mentioned,

from the region and various parts of the globe. This is an excellent opportunity for Jordan to see where its educational system stands in relation not only to our next door neighbors (whose education systems we have an idea about) but to other countries in the world: to see what problems and obstacles they face, how they tackle such problems, how they implement projects, how they conduct reform, what excellent experiments they have which we can benefit from. The Jordanian participants need to be as inquisitive as possible about such matters, for such an opportunity may not come by easily — with such momentum and of such calibre, that is.

3. To take advantage of the visit of distinguished scholars and participants. Among the conferees, there are many distinguished personalities and scholars. Use should be made of their presence. Instead of Jordan bringing them as experts or consultants at a great expense at other times, since such scholars and experts are already here, they could be invited to look, inspect and offer opinion or advice. There is nothing like a fresh perspective or the perspective of an outsider, let alone proven experts.

4. To participate in global decisions. We do not want Jordan to be just a recipient of the opinions of others, but an active participant and a confident partner in deliberations and decisions affecting education the world over. Jordan has an excellent experience with education, and it is in a position to offer advice and volunteer opinion. We are no amateurs. This is our chance to show the world that we have something excellent to look at and worthwhile to listen to.

In addition, and this is a point I wish to underscore strongly here, since the assembly's theme is about teachers and schools, in particular (and not education in general), much of the thinking and debate in Jordan has to focus on teachers and schools per se. Our teachers and our schools are among the best in the region, despite our reservations about them. The thousands of Jordanian teachers seconded to many neighbouring countries, and the high demand for Jordanian teachers abroad, testify to their excellence.

Nevertheless, there is a widespread feeling that our teachers could be better (much better) than they are now. The same applies to our school environment. Since a great deal lies on the shoulder of the teacher, and since almost everything happens in schools, we must take these two elements of the educational process seriously. We hope that Jordan will emerge from the conference with a crystal clear idea about what it precisely needs to be done to better the performance of teachers and the school environment. We also expect the media and the press to play an effective role: to be more inquisitive, investigative and aggressive in their coverage of this event.

We want the 1996 World Assembly in Amman to make a difference, especially to us, in this part of the world, and especially with respect to teachers and schools, public and private.

New U.S. national security team 'could change dynamics of involvement in the region'

By Lamis Andoni

BOSTON — The change of guard in the top American national security team is not expected to effect a substantial shift in the American Middle East policies. However, the blunt, sometimes aggressive, styles of the new secretaries of state and defence could change the dynamics of the U.S. involvement in the region, according to analysts.

With mounting calls in the Arab World that the U.S. pursue a more even-handed policy, the aggressive styles of the newly designated Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Secretary of Defence William Cohen could further jeopardise the American credibility in the region, some political observers in Washington maintain.

American officials disagree, maintaining that the U.S. role will remain essential since it is the only party "trusted" by both Israel and moderate Arab governments. "They say that there will be no substantial changes, especially that the main team that has been supervising the Middle East process, comprising Ambassador Dennis Ross and Aaron Miller, will remain in place."

However, the fact that both Albright, at the United Nations, and Cohen, in the Senate, have been outspoken in advocating an assertive American involvement in the region, based on strengthening the special Israeli-American alliance and isolating Iran and Iraq, could intimidate and further strain relations between Washington and some of its Arab allies, especially Egypt.

Although Albright, a Democrat, and Cohen, a Republican, come from two different political traditions, they have individually campaigned against any policies and resolution that could

intimidate Israel, whether in Washington or at the United Nations.

However, it is mostly the blunt and rather aggressive, albeit different styles, of both the steely Albright and outspoken Cohen that might further damage Washington's credibility as an honest and balanced broker in the faltering Middle East peace process.

As the American ambassador to the United Nations, Albright provoked many Arab ambassadors with her undiplomatic language, whether against Iraq or Iran, or with her effortless campaign to block resolutions favourable to the Palestinians.

"The fact that both Albright, at the United Nations, and Cohen, in the Senate, have been outspoken in advocating an assertive American involvement in the region, based on strengthening the special Israeli-American alliance and isolating Iran and Iraq, could intimidate and further strain relations between Washington and some of its Arab allies, especially Egypt."

Former Senator Cohen is known for his explicit support for Israeli claims to Palestinian lands and East Jerusalem, and is equally vehement in expressing vocal opposition to Palestinian rights and financial and military aid to Arab governments who fail to make peace with Israel.

As part of an American campaign, over the few past years, to prevent a reaffirmation of previous United Nations resolutions that recognise Palestinian national rights and Arab grievances, Mrs. Albright shocked many Arab diplomats by an aggressive and widely perceived derogatory memo she sent to the other United Nations delegates. The memo, sent in

September 1994, did not only warn delegates against referring to United Nations resolutions on Palestine, during the annual ordinary session of the General Assembly, it also described the resolutions as "contentious, irrelevant and obsolete."

Although Albright was mainly implementing her government's policy, that opposed any United Nations resolutions that were seen to alienate Israel, the undiplomatic diplomat is said to have personally lobbied for an American veto of a Security Council resolution that was mildly critical of Israeli plans to expropriate lands in Beit Hanina. For while the State Department favoured an

abstention, Mrs. Albright, according to diplomats in Washington, had lobbied successfully for an American veto that blocked a rather timid Security Council resolution in 1995.

Mrs. Albright's perceived stand favouring Israel had triggered the major Arab American organisations to lobby, albeit unsuccessfully, to block her nomination to the position of secretary of state, according to Arab American leaders. The major Arab American organisations had been hoping that former Democratic Senator George Mitchell, of Lebanese origin, to succeed Warren Christopher, even though Mr. Mitchell has always maintained a pro-Israeli track in

Congress. Mrs. Albright is viewed, nevertheless, by many American Arab leaders to be closer in stand to the Israeli and the American Jewish right.

Her pivotal, scathing campaign against United Nations Secretary General Boutros Ghali made many foreign diplomats at the United Nations and Washington believe that she was resentful of any criticism of American policies and that the American will should be respected by the United Nations. "Civil servants should not forget who pay their salaries," she once said.

Mr. Cohen, the only Republican so far in the American cabinet, has a consistent record of supporting, co-sponsoring and co-signing congressional resolutions in favour of Israel positions.

In his 16 years in the Senate, Mr. Cohen lobbied actively for financial and military to Israel, co-signed several petitions and letters to move the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Israel and supported Israeli settlements in Jerusalem.

In 1994, Mr. Cohen urged President Bill Clinton to veto any United Nations resolution that "states or implies" that Jerusalem "is an occupied territory" and has consistently maintained support for Israel's claim to Jerusalem as its "unified and eternal capital."

Mr. Cohen has always advocated linking American financial and financial aid to Arab governments with these governments' readiness to end the boycott of Israel. He has written letters to Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti leaders, urging them to normalise relations with Israel and has a record of opposing arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

In the American context, however, Mr. Cohen is considered "a moderate Republican," especially regarding economic and civil rights issues that made him,

in the view of analysts, a perfect bridge between a Democratic administration and a Republican Congress.

The nomination of Mr. Cohen and Mrs. Albright has not been seen, so far, by observers as a clear indicator to the course that the U.S. foreign policy will take in general and in the Middle East in particular.

But there seems to be an agreement, of analysts in Washington, that the appointments indicates that President Clinton needs a strong team, that includes members from both parties, to resist a growing isolationist trend among the American conservatives and to appease a right-wing Congress.

Support by right-wing Senator Jesse Helms, an ardent supporter of Israeli Likud policies, to the newly designated secretaries indicates that Mr. Clinton's decision was mainly aimed at pre-empting congressional opposition to his cabinet.

Consequently, Mrs. Albright's aggressive style in promoting American policies as well as Mr. Cohen's commitment to the Republican foreign policy agenda provide a bipartisan team that can formulate and implement a unified American foreign policy by an otherwise government seemingly divided on most domestic issues.

But perhaps the question is how far will the foreign policy, its style and substance, be subject to domestic considerations that require an appeasement of the right-wing American Congress.

Administration officials insist that the U.S. policy in the Middle East will be characterised by "continuity." To many analysts, the way Mrs. Albright deals with the faltering Middle East process will be the first real indicator of how the blunt politician will reconcile between her aggressive style and the role of a mediator in an increasingly explosive situation.

LETTERS

Back to replying

To the Editor:

AS A Jordanian, I couldn't agree more with the sentiments expressed by Paul Saint in his letter "Courtesy reply" (Jordan Times, Dec. 8, 1996). I, myself, have repeatedly experienced the frustration of my fellow countrymen, whether in government or private business, of simply having my letters not answered or replied in a less than timely manner.

Of course, some people are very diligent, but I am sorry to say, they are not the majority.

Do we expect the world to come to us with everything? Do we expect people to be able to read our minds? Or is it that most Jordanians are illiterate? Living and working abroad, one is impressed that whether one writes to the lowliest bureaucrat or the president of France, one always gets a timely reply, or at least a good sense and respect for the individual. It is a habit I hope more of my countrymen would learn.

Ali Abunimah,
Chicago.

Society on the Move

Taking a line-item interest in the business

HRH Crown Prince Hassan, Wednesday got down to brass tacks at one of his favourite institutions, the Royal Scientific Society (RSS). RSS President Hani Mulki and other senior officials were just preparing to review the 1997 budget when Prince Hassan stopped by to share his own detailed views about the programmes and projects delineated for next year, concentrating on the content of those line items rather than their price tags. The Crown Prince emphasised that the new budget should support applied research and technology, new ideas and standardisation, plus a pitch to continue to bring Jordan's advancements in scientific and technological fields to its colleagues on the global level. He suggested that the RSS team delve deeper into their work and not simply skim the surface of concepts. On budget items concerning the society's employees, the Crown Prince emphasised the benefit of allocating money for retraining, and spoke of the value of people with long years of service and thus accumulated knowledge in science and technology. In the end, RSS officials came away from the impromptu meeting with a proper sense of direction for the next stage of the RSS and a show of support which they expect will be augmented by Jordanian industry.

Khasawneh, wife of Chief of the Royal Court Awn Khasawneh, and Ghadeer Toher, press officer to the prime minister. The royal wedding is expected to host three thousand on the women's separate guest list alone.

TARGET PRACTICE: Back home in the law-making arena, it appears that it's open season on ministers again. Exercising their legislative right to question the executive authority on government related issues, two Lower House deputies put separate questions to Minister of Tourism Saleh Irsheidat and Minister of Industry Trade Ali Abul Ragheb.

WHAT'S HIS BEEF? Hailing from Aqaba, Deputy Bader Riati questioned Dr. Irsheidat on the ownership of the land on which the beachfront Aquamarina Hotel is situated. While authorities were unclear as to what exactly Mr. Riati was driving at, they did acknowledge that the resort and water sport industry of the port town often comes under fire by the more conservative constituency of the Aqaba Regional Authority. But back in the House chamber, Dr. Irsheidat explained that the land occupied by the Aquamarina Hotel was leased to its proprietor, Simon Khoury, by what was then the Youth and Sports Organisation, now the Ministry of Youth. According to Mr. Khoury, since signing the lease in 1976 the hotel continues to meet all its obligations according to law, which include paying an annual rent plus any government imposed hikes on that rent, and all other required taxes including property tax, "as if we owned the land." Mr. Khoury believes that Aqaba deputies would better serve their constituencies by seeking to promote the area's seaside resort resources and thus bring economic growth to the region. In fact he was happy to report the success of one of his own personal endeavours in that sphere. Having recently accommodated large conventions of Benelux tour operators and media representatives at his hotel, Mr. Khoury received confirmation Wednesday that Neckermann and Sunsnacks, a large charter flight operator from the Benelux, will begin weekly charters from Brussels to Aqaba beginning March 27 and continuing year-round. According to Mr. Khoury, the principals involved found Aqaba more attractive than its neighbour Eilat. "But after 20 years of surviving to build up Aqaba's tourism industry," Mr. Khoury says, he would be willing to sell his hotel business for the right price, and if Deputy Riati is interested, he's game to talk.



His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday tours the first military art exhibition of photographs and paintings by Russian artist Dasha Zaitseva (in foreground). The exhibition, held at the Jordan River Designs showroom, will be open to the public for one day only, today, from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. The collection of works is entitled: "Images of the Jordanian Armed Forces." Ms. Zaitseva was born in Moscow in 1968 and has a bachelor's honours diploma of stage design from the Moscow Arts College and a masters in painting from the Surikoff State Academy Art Institute in Moscow. She has exhibited her work in Jordan earlier: at the Fuhis Festival in 1994 and at the U.S. embassy in 1995. Ms. Zaitseva's art hangs in the collections of Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan, Princess Sarvath, Princess Sumaya and Prince Abdullah bin Al Hussein (photo by Crystal)

construction of new hotels in the Petra region, was taken based on a survey conducted by the Industrial Development Bank (IDB). The IDB study was prompted because many would-be hoteliers have approached the bank for loans to start their enterprises. Conclusions of the study, however, showed that there are sufficient hotels in the Petra area to accommodate the expected number of tourists until 1998. In addition, the Petra Regional Council is seeking a similar construction suspension until the completion of the Petra region master plan being carried out by Dar Al Hndasah.

HERE COMES THE BRIDE: The J.T. has nuptials to celebrate as well. Our proof-reader Pradeep Kumar has returned from vacation in his native India a married man. His wife Soniya, a nurse, will join him here in Amman next week. The entire J.T. staff was invited to the Hindu wedding held at the YMCA in Alappuzha, where the ceremony was conducted between 11:55 a.m. and 12:05 p.m. on Nov. 10. While we were unable to attend, our best wishes were with the newlyweds.

SHOPPING DAYS TO GO: If you missed the Armenian Christmas Bazaar and arrived late for the American Women of Amman's event of the same ilk, you still have time for the just as popular German Speaking Ladies of Amman Christmas Bazaar on Friday at 11:00 a.m. at the Marriot Hotel. Be there early, the goodies go awfully fast at this one.



Jennifer Hamarneh Pradeep Kumar and Soniya

STILL AT THE HELM:

It seems like only yesterday that we reported that Higher Council for Science and Technology Secretary General Hani Mulki, who, as we mentioned above is also president of the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) was elected as president of the World Association of Industrial and Technological Research Organisations (WAITRO).



Hani Mulki

And now, as WAITRO, based in Trostrup, Denmark, celebrates its 25th anniversary, Dr. Mulki has been re-elected as president for another annual term. Jordan's aptitude in several fields has been receiving increasing recognition in international forums and organisations. During a recent visit to the RSS, the director of the Business Development Office of Canada's International Development Research Centre Alain Berranger said, "The re-election of a Jordanian scientist to the presidency of such a prestigious organisation as WAITRO, is a sure sign of the confidence the world scientific society places in the capacity of the Jordanian scientific community to lead this organisation through the challenges of the 21st century."

WEDDING IN RIYADH: A distinguished group of Jordanian women arrived in Saudi Arabia to celebrate a royal matrimony. Tonight, in Riyadh, the daughter of Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, Princess Reema, weds Prince Faisal bin Turki bin Nasser bin Abdul Aziz. Prince Faisal is the son of Prince Bandar's sister, Princess Nura bint Sultan bin Abdul Aziz. Princess Reema's mother is Princess Hayfa bint Faisal bin Abdul Aziz. During her father's long tenure as ambassador to the U.S., the princess studied in Washington. The eminent guests from Jordan who will be attending the private affair are Fatima Kabarti, wife of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabarti, Nawzat Shaker, wife of HRH Prince Zeid bin Shaker, her daughter Nisreen Shaker-Hasari, and daughter-in-law Maysam Shaker, as well as, Dina Janbek

CLIPPING WINGS: Irbid Deputy Abdul Majid Azzam wanted to know from Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb whether Arab Wings was required to pay income tax. Over at its offices, Arab Wings President and Chief Executive Officer Ronzi Shuwayhat said the airline, whose capital is supplied by Royal Jordanian, but which operates as a commercial company, has since its establishment in 1975, paid all its obligations including income taxes and customs duties. Mr. Shuwayhat was puzzled by Mr. Azzam's query in Parliament, adding that if the deputy had questions about the airline he was most welcome to put them directly to the officials of Arab Wings. The airline operates executive jet services for business people and officials of different governments worldwide. Such flights have taken Arab Wings passengers to destinations as far as Dakar, Johannesburg, Ula Baar in Mongolia, and St. Petersburg.

ENOUGH WITH THE HOTELS ALREADY! Meanwhile, the Ministry of Tourism is suspending licensing of two categories of new hotels. The first suspension is on non-classified hotels, that is those with no stores. Here, the ministry wants time to study criteria for these types of hotels on the country level. The other decision, to suspend the

Britain launches programme to curb TV violence

LONDON (R) — The British government launched a "programme of action" Tuesday to reduce the amount of violence on television seen by young people. Heritage Secretary Virginia Bottomley said she was concerned about the cumulative effect on young people of seeing violence on television, particularly in emotional soap operas. Adultery, rape, murder and assault are portrayed as part of everyday life in many popular British television dramas — some of which are routinely watched by children.

"Violence on television is a cause for concern for many viewers. I share that concern," Ms. Bottomley said. "Statistics suggest that the amount of violence on our screens is decreasing and I welcome that. But even so there are times when violence seems too prominent in the schedules, and this can be disturbing for many viewers, young and old."

Ms. Bottomley was speaking after meeting the chairman of the BBC, the broadcasting standards council and members of the independent television commission, which regulates Britain's commercial channels. Television regulators must continue to ensure that their codes and guidelines are regularly updated and effectively enforced and that standards are maintained, she said. Ways in which broadcasters could improve advance programme information for viewers would be explored and the government would contribute to the funding of research if it is thought necessary, Ms. Bottomley said. She said the government did not wish to censor television output but wanted to make sure that parents had better information about the contents of television programmes.

Early next year, the broadcasting standards council will organise a seminar for broadcasters to focus on what action they could take. Ms. Bottomley said the V-Chip idea — a device that allows parents to prevent their children watching certain programmes — was still under consideration but needed more work. "I certainly wouldn't rule it out," she said. Britain operates a "line o'clock" threshold in the evenings before which violent and sexual scenes are not allowed to be shown in television programmes.

Identity and integration

Nationalism, Minorities And Diasporas: Identities And Rights In The Middle East

Edited by Kirsten E. Schulze, Martin Stokes and Colin Campbell Tauris Academic Studies, London 1996, £39.50

THE STUDY of minorities and stateless peoples of the contemporary Middle East has usually had a clear political dimension, with its focus particularly on the Palestinians and Kurds, and stress on human rights or law. It is also sometimes a question of definitions or basic statistics, for in some countries these "minorities" may actually form the majority of the population, or the largest single community, as some maintain of the Palestinians in Jordan.

The 14 chapters here, each by specialists in their fields, range more widely, trying to assess the place of Jews, Maronites, Druze and Alawites, as well as Kurds and Palestinians, in various states. Some of these rather short studies examine cultural rather than narrowly political issues, though most show how far minorities have been

integrated into the respective political system, how they define their identity and go on to assess how the state has formulated a response.

The Palestinian factor in Jordan's foreign policy is analysed by Raad Alkadiri, while other aspects are covered in two further chapters. The dynamics between minorities and the Israeli state are also taken up in a study of Israeli and Maronite nationalism in which Kirsten Schulze questions whether a minority alliance is natural, a theme taken up by Laile Parsons about the Palestinian Druze community during the 1947-49 war.

The position of the Kurds of Turkey is analysed by Bill Bowring, whose basic conclusion is that the goal of secession remains a chimera, at least for the present. Nevertheless, he argues that it is possible to defend the rights of the Kurdish minority, even without a convention recognising minority rights, through the work of brave Turkish and Kurdish lawyers and also the Kurdistan Human Rights Project, founded in 1992.

One of the most congenial, well argued studies is that of

Khaled Salih, *Demonising a Minority: The case of the Kurds in Iraq*. Salih argues that the brutal use of RAF air power in regular British military repression of Kurds during the 1920s and 1930s went on to produce patterns of official thinking in Iraq which were essentially inherited from the period of British domination. With the failure of Baathist strategy to "manage" Kurdish dissidence, the Kurdish minority was demonised and became the object of deliberate state genocide. "The eight 1988 offensives, which were codenamed Alfal, were distinguished not merely by their brutality, but also by the clinical efficiency of their execution. This was modern genocide, carried out by strikingly well organised state and party apparatus" writes Salih.

The situation of Jewish minorities has, of course, more historical than contemporary relevance. Before the establishment of the state of Israel around one million Jews lived in the Muslim countries of the Middle East. The number declined then gradually dwindled to the present total of a few thousand. Tudor Parfitt writes here on Jewish minority

experience in Yemen, while Daphne Tsiboni analyses Jewish-Muslim relations in modern Iraq, where some 5,000 more affluent Jews remained, relatively integrated into the elite, until the 1960s.

The place of music in the culture of minorities is the subject of three more contributions. These range far and wide, from one on Music and contending identities in the Maghreb by Tony Langlois to a study of Korean diaspora communities in two Central Asian republics, thousands of miles to the east. Questions of a community's prestige and solidarity are examined in a study by Martin Stokes of another marginalised minority in the form of an Alawite ritual ceremony in Hatay, Turkish territory claimed by Syria. It shows up the relevance of the sad saying that music divides quite as much as it unites people — Middle East International.

Anthony Hyman

New tools for new artists

By Jean-Claude Elias

READERS OF the Jordan Times Weekender have certainly noticed that in last week's edition both Chip Talk (page B, left) and Rendezvous With Art (page C, right) columns tackled computer issues. While the first was the usual computer-talk, the second was more on the art-and-computer side. Even more amusing — whereas Chip Talk was about electronic diaries and organisers — the first paragraph of Mahmoud Mufti's story on computer art by Ismail Shammout told us how the artist was introduced to computers by his children who started the whole thing by offering him precisely an electronic organiser. Needless to say that neither the writers nor the editor did this intentionally.

This apparent coincidence is something that could actually be expected. Electronic diaries and organisers, whether as pocket-size dedicated machines or as software for bigger desktop computers, are a very hot subject, and so is art on computers. The first obvious conclusion is that it is therefore not only perfectly rational for the Weekender to simultaneously publish two such stories, but it also proves how "in" is your preferred English daily. The second conclusion is that most computer shy people come to first understand and then love the machines after getting acquainted to them through simple yet useful, attractive applications, electronic organisers being one such application.

The third and most important conclusion is something that sounds like sweet music to my ears. Those who have been regularly following Chip Talk know that I almost made it a leitmotiv that one can perfectly use computers for creative, artistic work, be it music or graphic, provided one is an artist first. In that sense, Mahmoud Mufti's story comes as a magnificent illustration of that leitmotiv. In a certain way it bears even more weight than what I could myself write in Chip Talk.

Indeed, whatever you may read here is written by someone who, because of his profession, tends to put computers first. The article on Ismail Shammout's work puts art

chip talk



first, and it still brings the proof, in a most beautiful way, that if one is a true, genuine artist, he or she can do wonders with a computer. Artists have been using brushes and pencils for centuries. They are taught for years to handle these traditional tools. Moving to computer software and mouse and still maintain or even increase creativity is not something that can be achieved overnight, without preliminary effort.

If it is rare to find artists or musicians who produce true art through computers and software it's either because the vast majority of them has not taken the time to become familiar with the new tools or sadly because they are not artists enough. There is simply no other sensible explanation. Corel Draw, the programme used by Ismail Shammout, is a pure marvel of software technology, but it won't paint by itself. I know it from personal experience! In the domain of modern music composers like Jean-Michel Jarre, Yanni, Kitaro, Vangelis, Rick Wakeman or Keith Emerson have shown us the yet undiscovered, huge potential of computers in music recording, production and composition. For one Jarre or Yanni, however, there are thousands of aspiring computer-musicians who for the time being succeed only in making beautiful noise.

Computer artists are now considered as oddities but the new generation of musicians and painters may feel as comfortable with software and mouse as their predecessors were with brushes, guitars and violins. I strongly believe that the best is yet to come.

If it makes you happy, it can't be that bad

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

YOUNG AND committed, and expressing the firm desire to refuse to be something altogether...

Disaccustomed, Disadvantaged, Disappointed, Discoloured, Discomposed, Disconcerted, Discontented, Discouraged, Discredited, Disdained, Disenchanted, Disillusioned, Disinclined, Disordered, Disoriented, Displaced, Discarded, Disvalued, Discomposed, Disengaged, Disinherited, Disinterested and Disfavoured.

We look for those things that make us feel happy, but the more things that we see around us, the less room we have for being optimistic. It is not that the intention is not there to make things better, but that things tend to be done according to certain constraints and priorities that are themselves wriggled to say the least.

One very true thing is that we have been waiting for weeks for that first heavy rainfall of the season. When it finally came a few days ago, entire streets in Amman, in the heart of western Amman, instantly turned into swamps. Why? Because the drainage system could not cope.

Now, given such a situation, would it not have been far more productive and far more visionary to have used the millions currently being cast into concrete in the Muhajereen area to refit a system that cannot cope at the slightest hint of rainfall? Certainly.

It also could have been poured into programmes that aim to strengthen those organisations that help individuals in need and promote social and environmental awareness: Those family, voluntary organisations, religious institutions and schools.

This is an awareness that demands that we be conscious of all the ideas floating around in Western societies today because they will come to mean a great deal for our lives in the future just as they do today in the West. Ideas that tell us how science is searching for ways to keep us forever young, how scientists are creating a brave new world of micromachines, be they telephones or televisions, how



excess information is clogging the pipes of commerce around the world and how the information overload is making people ill.

These are all ideas we have to be aware of. Others that have to do with our own peculiar situation we have to be more honest and forthright about.

We have to come to terms with the fact, because it just is not sinking in, that we are neither a highly developed country nor are we an industrialised economy. We are a Third World country ridden with debt but one bravely trying to forge a promising future.

Because of this, we can have no use for monuments that only promise to be containers of bureaucracy and more red tape. What we need are practical spaces for a decentralised government. Spaces that can be functional enough to house both efficient managerial decision making and problem solving.

What we also need to do is to provide young people with the opportunities to find sponsorship for those imaginative ideas that they sometimes have, like publishing a book or holding an exhibition of photographs.

Independent and decentralised local councils throughout the country, and not necessarily monumentally housed, can be viable conduits for such small projects and ventures that are at the heart of a throbbing and vibrant community spirit.

All over the world innovation is encouraged and creativity is rewarded. Here, alas, both are mocked. So what are we prepared to do about it?

JTV CHANNEL TWO WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, December 12, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran
2:05	Iris + Ovide & The Gang
2:35	Out Of This World (Comedy)
3:00	Covington Cross
3:30	Feature — The Young Adventurers
	Starring: Mark Marot & Mathew Kermoyan
5:00	News Flash
5:02	Continuation Of Film
5:30	French Programmes
	Intertainment Varieties
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	Magazine — Atomes Crochus
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Pacific Station
8:00	The American Chart Show
8:30	Material World
9:10	Kung Fu — The Legend Continues
10:00	News In English
10:25	Feature Film — The Great Mom Swap
	Starring: Shelly Fapars & Valerie Harper
12:00	Taratata

Friday, December 13, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran
2:05	People (Long Cartoon)
3:00	French Programmes
3:15	French Programme
	L'Ecole Des Fans
4:00	Crystal Maze
5:00	News Flash
5:02	French Programme
	Magazine — Envoye Special
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	Magazine — Allo La Terre
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Blossom
8:00	Documentary — Discover Magazine
8:30	Virtual Reality
9:10	Hunter
10:00	News In English
10:25	Feature Film — Back Draft
12:00	Family Matters

Saturday, December 14, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran
2:05	Adventures Of Mickey And Donald
2:30	Circus
3:00	French Programme
	Document — La France Aux Mille Villages
3:30	Family Programme — Fete Des Bebes
4:00	Gillette (Sports)
4:30	Cris Cross
5:00	News Flash
5:02	Futures
5:15	Blue Heelers
6:00	French Programme
	Serie — Jack
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	Magazine — Ziva
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Something Wilder
8:00	Documentary — Gardens Of The World
8:30	Prism
9:10	Lois And Clark (Superman)
10:00	News In English
10:25	Mini Series — Devices & Desires
11:15	Feature Film — Victor Victoria

Sunday, December 15, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran
2:05	Jonny Quest (Cartoon)
2:30	You Bet Your Life
3:00	French Programme
3:30	Entertainment — Week-ends Specialux
4:00	World Echo (Documentary)
4:30	The Famous Five
5:00	News Flash
5:02	Our World Their World — Documentary
5:15	All Our Children
6:00	French Programme
	Magazine — Faut Pas Rever
7:00	Le Journal

Magazine — Sports Et Musique

7:15	News Headlines
7:30	Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air
7:35	Auto — Classics
8:00	Album Show
8:30	Documentary — Hold Up The Sun
9:10	News In English
10:00	Cover
10:30	Tokio Concert
11:15	Yes Minister

Monday, December 16, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran
2:05	Muppet Show
2:30	Dad's Army
3:00	French Programme — Varieties
4:00	Nature's Inventions
4:30	Hey Dad
5:00	News Flash
5:02	Wild Flower — Documentary
5:15	Destiny Ridge
6:00	French Programme — Magazine
	Science — Cinq Sur Cinq
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Rosanne
8:00	Disaster Chronicle — Documentary
8:30	Cinema, Cinema
9:10	The Lazarus Man
10:00	News In English
10:25	Mini Series — Devices & Desires
11:15	The Knock

Tuesday, December 17, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran
2:05	Budgie The Little Helicopter
2:30	Captain Planet (Cartoon)
2:40	I Love Lucy
3:00	French Programme — Sciences Cartoon
3:15	Magazine — Montagne
4:00	At The Zoo
4:30	Documentary
5:00	News Flash
5:02	Fun With Physics
5:15	Cyclone Tracy
6:00	French Programme
	Serie — La Lumiere Des Justes
6:15	Magazine — Extra Large
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Murphy Brown
8:01	Magazine Zero — One
8:30	Encounter
9:10	Lost Civilisation — Documentary
10:00	News In English
10:30	China Beach
11:15	Mission Impossible
12:00	Are You Being Served

Wednesday, December 18, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran
2:05	The Muppet Show
2:30	Circus
3:00	French Programme
	Jeux — Pyramide
3:30	Serie — Les Compagnons De L'Aventure
4:00	Documentary — Earth Revealed
4:30	Blizzard Island
5:00	News Flash
5:02	The Adventures + Kelly
6:00	French Programme
	Document — Ushuaia
7:00	Le Journal
7:15	Magazine — Sports Et Musique
7:30	News Headlines
7:35	Bakersfield P.D.
8:00	Challenges
9:10	N.B.A. Basketball
10:00	News In English
10:30	Bugs
11:15	Hart To Hart
12:00	Who's The Boss?

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

FANTASTIC FACTS

* Mrs. Theresa Vaughn, 24, appeared in court at Sheffield in 1922 on a charge of bigamy, confessed to 51 bigamous marriages within the space of 5 years. Her "husbands" were scattered all over Britain, Germany and even South Africa.

* In the Temple of the Sacred Tooth in Sri Lanka is a piece of bone worshipped by over 400,000,000 people. The bone is believed to be the left eye of Buddha.

* Count Meral, an Italian nobleman, could part his hair without using comb or fingers! He relied solely on his highly developed scalp muscles.

* Jose Caba Alvarez of Manzanara, Spain, had a weird hobby. He attended funerals. Not just of friends or relatives but of the several thousands of people who had attended his father's funeral. In 40 years he attended 15,220 funerals starting in 1913.

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

** Where can you change money?
Ayna yomkinok istibdal an-noqd?

** Do you have a telephone directory?
Hal endaka dalil haatiff?

** Where's the nearest telephone kiosk?
Ayna aqrah koshk haatiff?

** I want to send this parcel?
Oreed an orsel hatha at'tard?

** Tell me what I can do, please.
Akhhberni matha astati' an af'al min fadiek.

** Can you exchange a traveller's cheque?
Hal yomkinok istibdal sheek seyahi?

** What's the exchange rate?
Ma si'rul istibdal?

** Where can I buy stamps? Is the post office near or far from this place?
Ayna yomkinok shiraa tvaabee? Hal maktab al-bareed qareeb am ba'eed an hathal makan?

"My Father and mother got married on the same day. This is a chance, isn't it? the pupil replied.

An idiot once went to the marketplace to buy a sole for his son's shoe.
Salesman: "What age is he?"
Idiot: "I really don't know, but his brother is one year and a half older than him."

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Who said about whom: We owe him so much. He freed mankind from hot lunch?
2. What were deadlocks?
3. Name the weekly magazine Mahatma Gandhi published and edited?
4. In nuclear power, what is coupling?
5. What are Zingari?

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

LYDIA — This name comes from Lydia, once an important city in Asia Minor. Its male citizens were wealthy, its women strikingly beautiful. All were famed for their culture. Liddy is a nickname.

CLINTON — Teutonic "from the headland farm" or "hill town."

LEILA — Pronounced "Ly-la," the name comes from Arabic, signifying "dark as night." Possibly a variant of Lily but it can mean one who is a "dark-haired beauty."

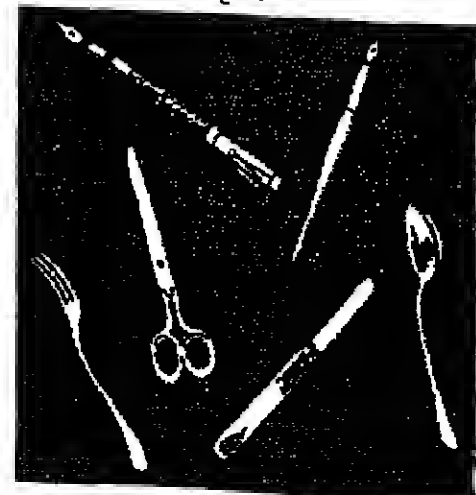
JILL — Old English, meaning "a girl or sweetheart." Once it was the short form of Julia, but later became a separate name. Well-known is the nursery rhyme: "Jack and Jill, went up the hill..."

Familiar, too, is the saying, "every Jack has his Jill (sweetheart)." Gill is a variant.

PUZZLES

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

Look very carefully at these six objects. At first sight you might think they had nothing in common. But there is something in common, leaving the sixth as a stranger. Can you spot the stranger?



* "How many days are there in this month?" said one of them to a passer-by.
Passer-by: "Sorry, I can't tell you. I'm not from this country, sir!"

* A fool got on a sick donkey and drove away through a graveyard. Suddenly the donkey halted in front a tomb.
"I wish this tomb belonged to a vet," said the donkey-rider to himself.

* A teacher was explaining the meaning of "chance" to his class. Having finished the explanation, he asked one of his pupils to give him an example to be sure whether he understood what he had said or not.

When Ben Kingsley was told the camera liked him

By Michael David

KRISHNA BHANJHI was born in Yorkshire, England, on the final day of 1943. His mother, Anna, was an actress, and he grew up in Manchester where his father, Rahimulla Harji Bhanji, a Kenyan Asian doctor had set up in practice.

Later, when Dr. Bhanji heard his teenage son wanted to be an actor, he suggested Krishna to change that to his father's nickname — Ben — adding wisely: "If you want an acting career you had better get an English name."

A visit to the Royal Shakespeare Company to see Ian Holm's tremendous performance in Richard III sealed young Krishna's decision and helped his transformation to the actor known everywhere now as Ben Kingsley.

English roles

Kingsley's acceptance into the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in 1967 was the foundation for a career that is as impressive in the theatre — if perhaps less visible — as it is on film.

But it is on the big screen that he has made his biggest impact. His first major film, Gandhi, in 1982, proved to be the catalyst for his undoubted talents. His preparation for the part is well documented.

Kingsley lost masses of weight, read 23 volumes of Gandhi's collection works and described the experience as similar to "having a layer of skin peeled off my eyeballs but one of the most joyful events I've ever been party to." Watch his magnificent performance and you really believe that he is Gandhi.

His Oscar-winning role in that work is one of many that have enlightened the cinema: The emotive lead in Pasaoli's Island; his Oscar nomination for best supporting actor as Meyer Lansky in Bugsy; Itzhak Stern in the Oscar-Laden Schindler's List and his recent role as the alleged torturer, Dr. Miranda, in Death And The Maiden opposite Sigourney Weaver, last year.

He looks like a professional actor rather than just a film star. In other words, he looks like a man on a mission rather than someone with homes in England and Los Angeles and film credits that put him among the great names of recent times.

Enormous responsibility

The signpost to greatness was shown to him when he worked with Billy Williams, a much-respected director of photography, in his first major feature film, In My Life. "Billy told me: 'The camera loves you, Ben.' And I believed him. It's as if he is saying: 'I am sorry but you are saddled with an enormous responsibility, you've just been accepted into the club.'"

"I was scared because if he'd said: 'The camera hates you,' you'd think: 'Oh well, that's solved the problem' and you'd just go back to the RSC."

Lately, Kingsley has been rather busy: Recent projects include two biblical films, Moses and Joseph, to be released; one Shakespeare play and two narrations, Moses, particularly, captured his imagination. This film, in his eyes,

also illustrates the difference between working before the camera and working on stage.

"It was a wonderful exercise to investigate," he explains. "Why Moses? Why that man? Moses had a very hard stammer. Aaron often had to speak for Moses when he was in front of the pharaoh and could not articulate."

"There is a point in my characterisation where Moses's stammer stops. For the first time he can speak to the pharaoh and it is a very powerful moment on camera. It's something you can't do on stage. But you can capture the moment on film."

Knowledge of guilt

"It is also at this point, for me, where events in the Bible start to make sense. Moses realises he is the survivor of the holocaust, so there is terrible guilt. All the firstborn were killed but he escaped."

"I've met holocaust survivor victims, through other films, and I know what survivor guilt is like. 'Why me, why am I still here?' and they start to cry. They talk about their brother, their grandmother and can't get through a sentence. So the 'Why me?' for Moses must have been enormous."

"Eventually he finds God (as his father) and he starts talking to God like a parent and he hands down God's parental law. It all makes wonderful psychological sense: Exiled from his kingdom with no homeland, no father or voice. Then he becomes the voice and the founder of his homeland and the man who becomes the interpreter of the great patriarch. It's a massive pendulum swing of will and effort."

Kingsley has also been working on a new film version of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night (he plays Feste the Fool) and two narration projects including Peter And The Wolf.

"I was cautious about doing Twelfth Night because I am not a classical actor. I am an entertainer. I fell into classical acting by mistake and actually started out as a singer. I wrote the music for a musical play and it transferred to London and I sang the songs in London."

Actor's method

"Eventually, I became sucked into the RSC and that's when I made a decision. The character I play in Twelfth Night allows me to clown around, to sing all the songs in the play and I love doing both. There is something philosophical in it too, where my character is the one who can stop anyone in that play and say: 'What do you think you're doing?'"

One of Kingsley's memorable performance was in Schindler's List — among the most emotive films of this decade. He is quick to point out exactly how that film works. It has nothing to do with acting.

"That screenplay reads like a poem. The camera in that film is a witness to what's going on. There is no acting in Schindler's List. It's all behaviour. The actors allowed the camera to film the behaviour under terrible circumstances. It taught me that the camera does not like acting. The camera is only interested in filming behaviour. So you damn well learn your lines until you know them inside out, while standing on your head!"

"You learn your character so well that you don't have to do anything. All the camera does is film you — it is unbelievably hard work. You're listening to other actors so carefully, and the environment and the room. The alertness of film-making is light years away from the detailed and disciplined exercise of repeating a theatre performance night after night."

"When you drop your guard in films, the acting process compensates. You get lazy and you start acting. And the audience in the cinema will say: 'Who do you think you are kidding?' If you're acting in close-up, they won't believe you. It just looks too contrived."

Kingsley has also done some narration work recently. "I like to do one or two films a year. But I can't prepare for something until I know what it's going to be. So I find that doing some narration, or maybe a documentary, is like going back into the gym for a couple of days."

"With narration, you have to be very accurate with your voice. It's a good exercise to do. I did Peter And The Wolf in aid of The Prince's Trust, something I believe in strongly. It is better for me to serve a charity as an actor or a voice, rather than at a luncheon being just a celebrity."

How does he choose a particular role and what criteria does he use? "I always try to make whatever character I'm playing a completely whole human being, with integrity, morality — or the lack of. I try to give the audience an opportunity of looking at the screen and recognising something."

"So when I choose a role it's either because I recognise the man, or that I'm very curious to know him. If I neither recognise nor know him then it is better that I don't play him" — London Press Service.



Ben Kingsley is among the most respected and talented actors of the cinema today. Perhaps best remembered for his Oscar-winning role in Gandhi, he plays the title role in Moses and the Fool in Twelfth Night in two new films

Post-mortem style — Evita rules again

By Francine Parvies
The Associated Press

DENVER — Don't cry for followers of fashion even if their latest role model is a dead dictator's wife. They're just taking their cue from Evita, the film starring Madonna as Eva Peron, in which thirty '40s fashions rule.

To merchants and designers, it's more than a film ... it's a fashion moment. Just call it cinema couture.

The movie doesn't hit the screens until Christmas, but already Evita-wear carries the mark of big business. Recent covers of Vogue and Vanity Fair tout the tough-yet-sexy stance of the late Mrs. Peron. Designers are rolling out spinoff styles at major stores, most notably Bloomingdale's, which entices with Evita boutiques from New York to Los Angeles.

Eva Peron, an illegitimate child born into poverty, died in 1952 at 33. During her life, she mobilised upwards by capitalising on her feminine charms, which did not go unappreciated by a string of suitors. When she married autocrat Juan Peron, she became one of the most powerful women in Argentina.

An erstwhile radio broadcaster and actress, she was unapologetic in her extravagance — even while claiming to despise the rich. The first lady of Argentina wowed crowds by flaunting Dior suits with nipped-in waists, entrance-making gowns, rows of ruffles, and jewels that shouted glamour with a capital "G."

On one occasion Evita explained her predicament: "Tonight you see me in disguise, wearing these loathsome trappings I have to put on because of my job. Pay no attention. You know I would rather be with you."

Still, why does a notorious politician, dead nearly a half-century, rate a post-mortem style tribute?

"We're short on role models, so whom do we pick but the hero in Hollywood?" says Nicole Miller CEO Bud Konheim. "Everybody is smitten with the idea of



Madonna as Evita Peron

Hollywood."

For those weary of casual dress, Evita signals the time to pull out the big guns ... or at least to play dress-up.

"She was one of the great fashion power plates of the 20th century, and it was about using the power of her sex appeal," says Ms. Konheim. "Evita exemplified power dressing. She used sex as a means to the top, and dressing was not about being demure."

"And that," says Ms. Konheim, "is her story." She's not the only one sticking to it.

The look is expected to trickle down to more affordable stores.

"Certainly this is going to have a powerful fashion impact. Often movies lead a refreshing viewpoint to fashion," says Lavelle Olexa of Lord and Taylor in New York, adding that spring fashion week gave a hint of the trend.

But when reality sets in, don't expect the average shopper to jump out of her jeans and into a sexy lace number. Appropriating the Annie Hall attitude by slipping into your boyfriend's jackets was no problem. But glomming onto the Evita fashion fantasy may be just too much work.

"This 1947-53 look is

very different from anything we've had in quite a while," says Valerie Steele, who teaches history of fashion at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology.

"Some of the evening dresses might catch on as knockoffs for parties," Ms. Steele says. "But the suits won't catch on in a big way for the average fashion person because they're so out of step with the minimalism and ease that have become so much a part of '90s fashion."

"Besides," adds Ms. Steele, "they have to be accessorised with hats and gloves, and no one's wearing them."

Study says U.S. parents revolting against violence

CHICAGO (R) — Large numbers of parents in the United States are stomping out of movie theatres and turning off TV sets because of overt violence in entertainment, a recent survey said.

"It is clear that the time has come to stop this media madness, and parents across America know it," said John Nelson, a trustee of the American Medical Association (AMA) which funded the poll.

The survey found that 66 per cent of all adults among the 800 people questioned had turned off a TV programme or left a movie theatre because of violence on the screen. Among parents who were in the company of children the turn-off, walk-out level was 75 per cent.

The survey also said 68 per cent of parents want a stronger movie rating system. 81 per cent want a rating system for TV shows and computer games and 72 per cent want one for music.

"Our kids spend more time today learning about life through media than any other source. We know media violence leads to real life violence," said Dr. Nelson, an obstetrician from Salt Lake City who is the father of eight.

"Our children learn by example, whether it be from positive role models like caring parents, Mr. Rogers, Michael Jordan or from destructive influences like Mortal Kombat, Gangsta Rap, Power Rangers and Terminator I and II," he added.

"Not only is our country's overdose of media violence contributing to a generation of individuals who are aggressive and insolent, they are young people who are also suffering the effects of couch potato syndrome and brain drain," said Dr. Nelson.

His comments were prepared for delivery at a news conference at the headquarters of the largest U.S. doctors' group at which the survey was to be released.

The AMA also said it was distributing a physician's guide to media violence to 60,000 doctors to help educate them and in turn their patients on the dangers of violence in entertainment.

David Walsh, founder of the National Institute on Media and the Family who helped the AMA draw up the guidelines, said "it is tragically ironic that at the very time we are wringing our hands about violent behaviour among young people, we are simultaneously entertaining them with it."

The telephone survey was conducted early last month by Global Strategy Group Inc. of New York and had an error rate of plus or minus 3.5 per cent.

60 minutes around the world

- World's population grows by 9,300
- £75 million is spent on all kinds of weapons
- Your heart beats 4,800 times
- Your hair grows 0.18796 millimetres
- 12,540,000 cans of Coca-Cola are drunk
- 916,500 McDonalds hamburgers are eaten
- 17,465 bottles of whisky are produced in Scotland
- 1,426,940 letters are sent
- The Pentagon in Washington receives 8,300 telephone calls
- £558,000 worth of goods are sold in Harrods Department Store in London
- 12,000 passengers pass through Heathrow Airport
- 166 Volkswagen cars are made in Germany

Taken from a book called Headway 1995

Sugar craving

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

DO YOU occasionally wake up in the middle of the night with an uncontrollable craving for something sweet? Do you ever sneak to the kitchen for a spoon of honey or a bar of chocolate?

Many of us experience seemingly uncontrollable urges for certain types of food, especially those high in both fat and sugar and new research has demonstrated that the condition is not critical.

For many years, researchers at the Women's Nutritional Advisory Service (WNAS) in the United States, assumed that these preferences were common. According to a recent study there are different preferences between men and women.

According to laboratory tests on rats, female rats selected carbohydrate-fat mixtures while male rats selected protein-fat mixtures.

Researchers at the WNAS are currently conducting more studies into craving, what triggers it, what does it mean and how to control it.

They say that most food cravings are fuelled by a mixture of nerve chemicals, that they call neurotransmitters which are responsible for the body's basic drive to survive.

But neurotransmitters and hormones aside, people eat more than the needs of their bodies and for all the wrong reasons, including what is called "emotional eating" where eating becomes a way to fill emotional void, according to an International Public Health Study in the University of San Diego.

Emotional eating is called "antecedent" which is an event preceding eating, followed by a "behaviour", the eating process, ending in a "consequence," the good feeling a person gets after eating.

The lift in the mood after eating sugar is provided by serotonin, a brain chemical that causes a feelings of pleasure, and since serotonin levels drop before women have their menses, therefore their bodies need to pump it back up.

The food pre-menstrual women crave most is chocolate, high in both sugar and fat and containing anti-depressants.

According to a survey by the Women's Nutritional Advisory Service, 80 per cent of 1,000 women interviewed experienced cravings for sweets the week before their period, which may be a psychological "comfort eating" related to hormonal swings and women's need for extra 500 calories a day during that time.

Many blame sugar cravings on fluctuating blood-sugar levels, hypoglycaemia, but the reality is that the

human body is sufficiently equipped to keep blood sugar levels well balanced, the only people who may suffer it are diabetics, alcoholics and people with medical conditions.

In an article in Public Health published in a health magazine, the director of London's Promis Recovery Centre, David Sunter, says it is possible to become addicted to sugar.

According to a new research by the Duke University Medical Centre, a high-sugar diet — while keeping an eye on calories and fat intake — does not tend to weight gain.

Researchers at the Department of Psychology at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, believe that by adjusting the brain's ability to absorb chemicals produced by the neurotransmitters, they can reduce the cravings.

The research also showed that people who struggle with strong food cravings are more susceptible to boredom than non-cravers.

Scientists at the Neuroscience Institute of San Diego, have discovered that chocolate mimics the effect of marijuana, since the confection contains anandamine, a chemical also produced in the brain that activates the same feel-good feeling that marijuana induces.

However, researchers say that to get a pot-like high a person weighing 60 kilos has to consume 10 kilos of chocolate in one sitting.

On the other hand those scientists found that chocolate contains phenols (antioxidants) that protects blood cholesterol from oxidation (damage) reducing risks of heart diseases.

Debra Waterhouse, author of Why Women Need Chocolate made excessive studies to dispel the anti-chocolate propaganda, came up with interesting facts about chocolate:

- Chocolate is not high in caffeine. It has only 6 mg per ounce.
- Chocolate is not high in cholesterol, it comes from cocoa beans high in stearic acid that lowers blood cholesterol.
- Chocolate is not high in calories, one Hershey's Kiss has only 25 calories.
- Chocolate does not promote tooth decay, an anti-bacterial agent has been recently found in chocolate that inhibits plaque formation.
- Chocolate does not cause acne.

Health-care system gives Canada a headache

By David Crary
The Associated Press

TORONTO — Doctors are angry, patients alarmed, politicians perplexed. Canada's health-care system has created a coast-to-coast headache that no one seems quite sure how to cure.

Budget-cutting provincial governments are closing hospitals and laying off nurses. Reports of patients dying due to delayed or slipshod treatment proliferate. And the flow of doctors to higher-paying posts in the United States is likely to increase.

Launched 30 years ago, the publicly funded system has long been a source of pride for Canadians — providing universal access to generally high-quality care. But a host of long-simmering problems have boiled over simultaneously in recent months.

In Ontario, the largest province, many doctors have been refusing to see new patients as they battle with the government over pay and autonomy. In British Columbia, doctors plan to close their offices on selected weekdays to retaliate for a cap on payments — a move that the health minister says will jeopardise patient care.

In Alberta, which three years ago led the way in slashing health funding, pressure from doctors and patients contributed to the government's decision this week to restore most of the cut funds.

That decision comes too late for some, according to a coalition of Alberta doctors which blamed the cutbacks for the deaths of two patients. The coalition said the patients died while awaiting transfer to acute-care facilities after coming to emergency wards that no longer had the proper personnel to treat them.

Across Canada, there was unprecedented public debate over the health-care system in November. Ontario call-in shows focused on the doctors' slowdown, the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. aired a three-part series on health cutbacks, and the national news weekly Maclean's had a 36-page cover story entitled: "Radical surgery."

The financing of Canada's health-care system is complex — a combination of direct federal cash transfers to the provinces, plus tax revenue collected by the provinces under a federally dictated formula.

The provinces are catching the flak for making cuts, but the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) places most of the blame on the federal government for reducing its transfer payments by several billion dollars.

Doctors warn that the current furor over funding will swell the ranks of physicians heading to the United States, where the bureaucracy is generally less cumbersome and after-tax earnings can be two or three times higher. An estimated 2,000 Canadian-trained doctors have left for the United States in the past 15 years.

The exodus continues even though Canada spends more money per capita on health care than any country except the United States — roughly \$54 billion annually for 30 million people. Total health spending is about 10 per cent of gross domestic product, compared to 14 per cent in the United States and an average of about 8.5 per cent in Western Europe.

Well-off Canadians have the option of travelling to the United States for private care. But polls indicate most Canadians oppose any major steps toward privatisation of their own system, and they tend to put up with delays and waiting lists.

For operations such as hip and knee replacements, waits can be six months or more. Even for heart surgery, delays can be too long.

Martin Goldbach, a heart surgeon who monitors waiting lists for the cardiac care network of Ontario, estimates that 40 to 50 heart patients each year die while awaiting surgery.

Alberta's Conservative premier, Ralph Klein, tried such a system briefly this year, but backed down when the federal government threatened to withhold transfer funds. But piecemeal privatisation is spreading — many hospitals are contracting out for some of their services.

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ANSWERS

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Comedian Woody Allen about Lord Montague, the Earl of Sandwich.
2. The style of long, braided hair.
3. The Harijan.
4. The linking of Western Europe's security with U.S. nuclear power.

5. Gipsies.

PUZZLES

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

Five of the objects are exactly the same length, leaving the fountain pen, which is longer than the others, as the stranger.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

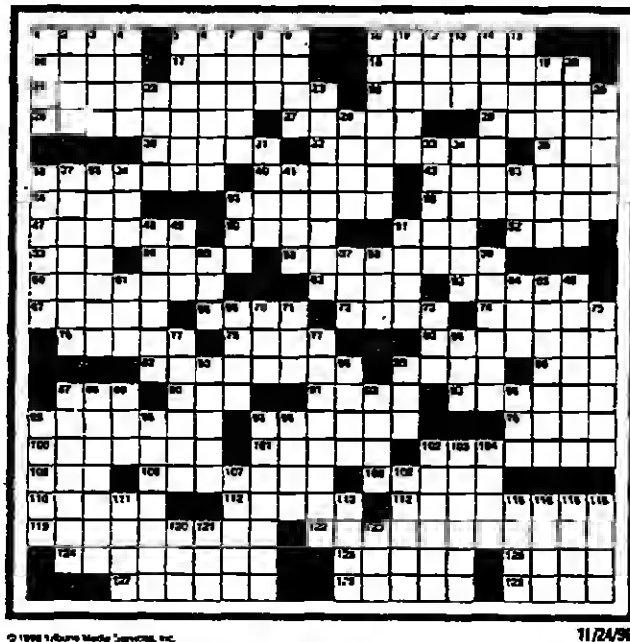
WORKING COUPLES
By Neeva Archer

ACROSS

- 1 Too best
- 2 Hostess Parle
- 3 More code signs
- 4 Marlowe
- 5 Music hall
- 6 Letter holder
- 7 Marlin and
- 8 Lynn's solution in boxing the deer?
- 9 Kamen and Liddle
- 10 vote?
- 11 Marlin
- 12 Shakes
- 13 Point line
- 14 Ever ready
- 15 Deep-sea fish
- 16 Clay lamp
- 17 Perished
- 18 Musical trend
- 19 Containing animal
- 20 Tense
- 21 Subtle
- 22 Author laugh
- 23 Antelope
- 24 High spins
- 25 Chivalry copy
- 26 Pioneer dinner
- 27 Pull
- 28 Singing brothers
- 29 Anger
- 30 Santa's time
- 31 Abby
- 32 Asa's opposite
- 33 Playhouse
- 34 Pairs
- 35 Stay
- 36 Utter without
- 37 Finding
- 38 Helping hands
- 39 Mithras cult
- 40 Wet
- 41 Gant weights
- 42 Move back
- 43 Turn over
- 44 Tropical snake
- 45 Aves
- 46 Marlin and
- 47 Howard
- 48 Liddle
- 49 One's breast
- 50 Flag
- 51 High chry
- 52 Felt
- 53 Play the
- 54 Lay some scale
- 55 Pavilion
- 56 Musical movement
- 57 Social
- 58 engagements
- 59 Western state
- 60 Bathing a bird
- 61 Biting back to snail
- 62 Laces
- 63 Strong tobacco
- 64 Catch
- 65 Cross was
- 66 God of love
- 67 Offshore
- 68 Group of three
- 69 Rhyler or
- 70 Stanley
- 71 Merchant
- 72 Whosegone
- 73 The us
- 74 Walcott sign
- 75 Free from
- 76 Collection of
- 77 anachronism
- 78 The — and the
- 79 Sea
- 80 Foot path
- 81 Cultural Barret
- 82 Violent storm
- 83 Move back
- 84 Hemingway
- 85 Adios, abba
- 86 Letter add-on
- 87 Our spouse
- 88 Unemployed
- 89 "a word from
- 90 Author of "The
- 91 "Sentimental Yuletide"
- 92 Carrom ball
- 93 Concern
- 94 100
- 95 Pinch
- 96 Spang back
- 97 Once — that
- 98 moon
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THE Sunday Crossword

Edited by Herb Ettemson



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Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Famous animal tamer trained his lions and tigers to leap through fire hoops.
2. At one time the handwriting on the wall was ominous. Now it's fast disappearing graffiti.
3. It seems speech today uses the words "you know" as punctuation marks.
4. Foolish idea odds feel to feud that leads to duel.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. KAJQVJ BDCPSYOTCF ZAIUJ LPRJFL AMY
AH R HVS ERJVVJ ZAIHDT LMXC KJHJPL
RL BVQAL. AJRRTVL HET TRPVL.
—By Ed Ireland

2. LGUVAK OIGT LURK XAP PA LOVERS AX
PIC LIVERS AY HAC'VG LCVG PA RONG
LNERSE LOURSE.
—By Duane H. McGee

3. U BAQ AT QSACRUR CRUPQN RANO
TAREUVO BIBEET U BUSH TSANQ UPH
POGOS SOFAGOS. LIQ SILLOS QSOON BURG
U QREED AT LAIPPEY LUFD.
—By K.C. Doyle

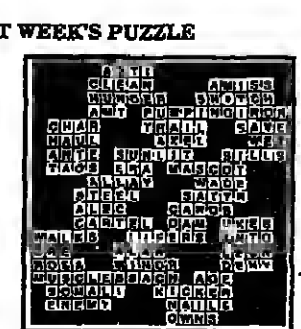
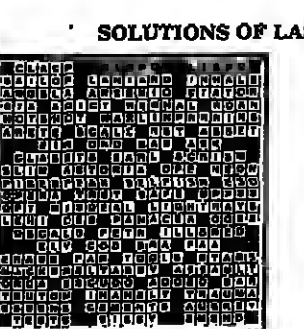
4. BS OUPA FGUNAP, MOMATCH NABITATP RU
WUN FRUD, DEBIT GNUMTFFBUSHIF LU WUN
LURE.
—By Ed Ireland

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DIAGRAMLESS, 17x17

By Don Johnson

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Social stigma and cash crisis hamper Bulgarian mental care

By Galina Sabeva
Reuters

TVARDITSA, Bulgaria — Hristo Asenov was abandoned as a baby in a Bulgarian orphanage and has spent all his 20 years in various institutions.

Mildly handicapped as a result of the neglect he suffered, he expects to spend the rest of his life with mental patients, some of them violent and dangerous, in a home on the outskirts of Tvarditsa, 210 kilometres east of the capital, Sofia.

"I have spent all my life between the walls of social care homes, deserted," said the blond, blue-eyed man, incongruously clad in U.S. army battledress left over from the Gulf War and donated recently by the Red Cross.

Residents, their dazed expressions contrasting oddly with their military dress, wander around the 50-hectare (123-acre) estate talking loudly to each other. Some just lie on the ground.

A former explosives factory and later a reform school, the home has debts of three million leva (\$8,300) and needs another five million to get through the winter.

A herd of cows provides meat and milk for 70 residents who work on the farm. The British embassy in Sofia donated some farm equipment last month.

"Our biggest problem is that men with minor cases have to live here with profoundly handicapped people and this is not the environment they need," said Mr. Kolev.

"There are some 40 profoundly handicapped men who are sometimes aggressive and even dangerous to deal with. They need constant care and their co-residents often have to act as support staff, especially at night."

Bulgaria's first homes for the mentally handicapped were set up in 1955. In 1995 some 5,000 adults were living in the country's 50 institutions and 2,200 children were housed in special boarding schools, official figures show.

In 1993, a Belgian, Martin Vanden Hende, launched a project to improve living conditions and change public attitudes, which he traces back to the former Communist era.

"Mentally retarded people didn't fit with the Communist ideal as communism was supposed to be perfect and they were not," he said.

"That is why the hospitals for mentally retarded people in Bulgaria were situated in the mountains, far away from people's eyes."

Decline in social care linked to transition

Vanden Hende said he had seen shocking scenes of neglect in his visits to Bulgarian institutions but despite their lack of funds, the authorities were receptive to his proposals.

Social care in Bulgaria, as in other reforming East European states, has fallen victim to the belt-tightening which accompanied the transition to a market economy.

Bulgarians struggling to make ends meet through the winter feel little sympathy for people with mental problems.

"People feel more sympathy for orphanages or homes for the elderly because they have children and parents too," said Deputy Director Zlati Stoyanov.

He said families were ashamed to have a relative at Tvarditsa. "It was very sad when we allowed one of the residents to visit his relatives. He left bappy, but returned desperate because nobody wanted him."

Deputy Social Care Minister Evgeniya Spasova said the ministry hoped to reduce the number of institutions and set up more day care centres.

She told Reuters she had personally closed two residential homes because of the inhuman treatment of residents by the staff. "They treated them worse than animals," she said.

But already tightly stretched spending will be strained even further next year as a tough new monetary regime proposed by the International Monetary Fund is expected to oblige Bulgaria to produce a balanced state budget for 1997.

With even relatively well-off Bulgarians facing possible food and fuel shortages in the coming months, the outlook for Tvarditsa's residents is grim.

"People are brought here when all hope for treatment or normal life in society has been lost," Mr. Kolev said. "There is no alternative for them, they are doomed to end their lives here."

Scientist cites progress in treating diabetes

WELLINGTON (R) — A New Zealand scientist believes he has achieved a world-first in the treatment of diabetes using pig cells transplanted into two patients.

Professor Bob Elliott of the Auckland University School of Medicine hopes the treatment will eventually rule out altogether diabetes sufferers' need for insulin injections.

The patients are still producing insulin seven months after receiving the live pig cell transplants. However, they still need injections, as the cells produce only about a quarter of their insulin requirements.

"We could up that though, possibly to take the whole lot. In fact I'm sure we could, and that's what we'll be aiming for in the next round (of research)," Prof. Elliott told Reuters.

He said he was wary of negative side-effects and erred on the side of caution when planning the dose of cells the patients received, but is now confident he can inject more cells.

The insulin-producing cells are dotted around the pigs' main digestive gland, the pancreas. Encased in a gel-like substance which prevents them being destroyed, the cells are injected into the human abdominal cavity in a five-minute procedure.

"We're hoping they'll last for many years. Just how long we don't know, but it would be nice," Prof. Elliott said.

Crown Prince calls on donors to address UNRWA deficit

(Continued from page 1)

dangers of transfer, the dangers of movement of further population from the territories elsewhere do exist. We have to have our eyes open to this, on the one side there is the possibility of the dangers of the cutbacks whether across the board or selectively, which are extremely worrying to the host and donor countries as well as the possibility of deterioration further of the appalling situation in the occupied territories.

We call upon your governments to reverse that signal and reaffirm your commitment to assist the countries and peoples of the Middle East to tackle the outstanding problems including that of the Palestinian refugees.

The implications of a large deficit in budget would be a drastic cut in its operations which are essential for over 3.2 million refugees. Given that these operations are confined to basic education, health and relief as well as social services, there is very little room, if any, to cut without jeopardising the UNRWA's basic mission. It will threaten about 650 schools in the five UNRWA provinces and prevent about half a million school children from education which has been rightly considered as the main area of their investment and sustainability. Knowing that UNRWA employs about 21,000 local staff members, the cut in its operations would also deepen the unemployment as well as the underemployment from which the Palestinian refugees suffer, particularly in some host countries.

Once again let me go back to non-discriminatory moves towards social productivity. We cannot talk about employment and underemployment in the context of Jordan and distinguish the Jordanians from Palestinians. We are talking about economic improvement across the board, we are talking about infrastructure across the

board and I would like to say that it is my hope, as well as my personal experience, that we will be able to move hand-in-hand, in step with each other. However, if strategies are created then these disparities clearly were made as destabilising this particular successful experiment.

The abrupt cut in UNRWA's operations would shift the burden to the host governments and I can speak for other hosts which are not prepared to handle this costly and additional burden. Let me repeat here and once again that Jordan has been contributing the most towards alleviating the hardships of 41 per cent of all Palestinian refugees and as Mr. Hansen has said Jordan is the largest donor and host country. While we continue to cooperate with UNRWA, we do not see any possibility of suddenly shouldering its services resulting from its financial crisis. The donor countries should maintain their commitment to this cause until a just and comprehensive solution is reached.

Let us not forget that the purpose of this meeting is to tackle a financial matter of a transitional nature. Even if all the UNRWA budget requirements were met, the Palestinian refugee problem will remain, waiting for a comprehensive solution. In fact, the whole Middle East peace process will remain in jeopardy, if the refugee problem is not resolved. The adequate resolution of the refugee problem would entail the gradual phasing out of UNRWA, but we should avoid jumping to conclusions and prematurely hastening weakening this vital organisation. We know from experience that peace-building is a slow and lengthy process which may not always move forward smoothly. Our continued commitment, as host and donor countries, to UNRWA and the Palestinian refugees has indeed been demonstrated now

more than ever before.

The last meeting of the Refugee Working Group of the Multilaterals was held in Jordan less than a month ago. Very little progress, if any, was achieved in that meeting, though the fact that it was held in the midst of a stalled peace process must be a source of satisfaction to us. After all, what is peace-making about, what is peace-building about if it is not about people? In the meantime, more data has unveiled a starker profile of the living conditions of refugees in the recent survey that was conducted by FAFO, a Norwegian organisation, and the Department of Statistics on the living conditions in Jordan. Against these positive steps, the joint committee on the displaced Palestinians — the DP's — that met in Bethlehem last week, regrettably, was not attended by Israel, another indication of how troubled the peace process has become.

I would like to stress here ladies and gentlemen, in this meeting Jordan's firm position on many occasions in the past. We support all efforts that work for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. This requires the consolidation of all goodwill that we can muster to assist in the implementation of what has been concluded between the parties and in particular on the Palestinian track. It also requires the resumption of peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and indeed it requires comprehensive peace to include Syria and Lebanon on the basis of U.N. resolutions. Any tactical delay may frustrate further moderation in the region and push to the surface radicalism and extremism.

The rights of the Palestinian refugees are well spelled out in the United Nations resolutions. They boil down to the right of return and/or compensation. The U.N. General Assembly keeps reminding the world community of these rights every year

since 1948. Unfortunately, no action in this regard has been taken, but the problem remains unresolved. Given the complexity of the Palestinian refugee problem, we believe that donor and host countries should at least ascertain their support to UNRWA and stand against premature phasing out of its services, be it direct or implicit.

On the basis of our humanitarian position and commitment, I would like to say that over and above our discussions here with UNRWA, we are taking the initiative, jointly with UNHCR, to discuss the multiplicity of refugee problems in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia. This region has experienced some of the world's largest and most protracted refugee and displacement crises (Afghanistan and Iraq). The Palestinian refugee issue will not be dealt with as it is in the jurisdiction of UNRWA. In a few months from now, a regional meeting will be held in Amman to discuss the problem of population displacements in this large region with the objective of reaching a plan of action and an agreed-upon declaration of principles to prevent and settle these problems.

But I do go back to the long-standing issue of Palestinian refugees and say once again that there are five provinces and that the Palestinians on their soil in the territory deserve our support and our consideration. The peace implementation programme, gifted as it is, requires the full interaction from us all and once again I do want to say that host and donor countries do not expect unpleasant surprises. I certainly would like to mention once again that this host country, Jordan, is the largest and most contributive host country and expects the understanding of the international community of what we are trying to do.

Thank you for your attention and I wish this workshop every success.

Deputies complain of delays in replies

(Continued from page 1)

ty to help it cope with heavy financial burdens.

The municipality, he said, only receives 20 per cent of Jerash tourism revenues while it has to provide for all facilities to tourists, especially during the annual Jerash Festival for Arts and Culture.

"The municipality cannot afford, with its current income, to provide the basic needs of its inhabitants and facilities for tourists at the same time."

Deputy Sa'ad complained. Minister of Tourism Saleh Irshaidat said that JD40,000 budget had been allocated in the 1997 budget for Jerash and will be transferred to the municipality on Jan. 1. In addition, the government is planning to set up open-air markets in Jerash that would replace the old one "that is not licensed." Owners of shops in the old Flea market will have priority over others in the new market, he said.

"Jerash is of utmost importance to us," Mr. Irshaidat said. "There are also projects underway to decorate the city."

Islamist Deputy Badr Riati said Jordanian teachers in Saudi Arabia had been told that their allowances there do not exceed JD100 and that their places of work were situated in remote and desolate areas.

The only opposition deputy who thanked the government for taking "the right measures" was Islamic Action Front Deputy

Ibrahim Kilani. Deputy Kilani expressed deep satisfaction over the government's "wise move" to form a special committee for selecting those who be included in the Royal pardon.

The committee excluded premeditated murder crimes, manslaughter and traffic violations from the list.

"For the first time, the Royal Decree was rightly applied by the Cabinet," he said.

Islamists score rare victory

(Continued from page 1)

opens the door for non-Islamist banks to make use of the laws governing Islamic banks' works. Some called on the House to refer the draft back to the government and proposed instead the phrasing of two new separate laws: One for non-Islamist banks and another one for Islamic banks.

There is only one Islamic bank in Jordan and it is governed by a separate law of its own: The Islamic Bank Law. The Islamic Bank, contrary to other local and international banks, does not take profit nor does it give interests on savings. However, it shares the profits in any projects it finances. Normal banks give interests on savings and take profits on loans.

Islamist deputies like Hammam Sa'ed, Ibrahim Kilani, Suleiman Sa'ad and Abdul Aziz Jaber voiced fears that this provision

would open the way for new banks to "make use of the two laws."

"This would be an unacceptable duality," said Islamist Deputy Ahmad Kofahi.

Deputy Rawabdeh seconded him and contended that mixing between the two laws will create a dilemma.

Minister of Finance Marwan Awad did not oppose to arguments forwarded by Islamists or centrists. He said that the government did not intend to create "chaotic duality" or give leeway to non-Islamist banks to function under an Islamic umbrella. What was intended, however, was to license new Islamic banks.

"It was only meant to give the Central Bank the authority to license new Islamic banks," the minister said. "If the phrasing is vague, then an amendment is necessary."

Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour

also spoke along these lines and proposed that the provision that gives the Central Bank the authority to approve the banks' bylaws should be taken out.

With an overwhelming majority, Islamist, and centrist deputies (that include the 22 ministers) voted in favour of the proposal.

It was not clear, however, whether the government will present a new draft that governs the work of new Islamic banks. Islamists proposed that the "Islamic Bank Law" be simply changed to "Islamist Banks Law."

Earlier in the session, the government answered parliamentarians' complaints about the shortage of water in Shobak and sewerage problems in Amman. In Shobak, there is a water crisis, centrist Deputy Taha Hababbeh said.

"In some villages and residential areas, 40 days might pass by without water," Deputy Hababbeh

said.

Minister of Water and Irrigation Samir Kassar said that the ministry was exerting all possible efforts to solve water-related problems, in Shobak and Tafleeh in particular.

"Shobak and Tafleeh might have taken more of our attention than any other areas. But projects there necessitate money and strenuous efforts to be executed," the minister said. "I ask the deputy to look at next year's budget and see for himself that the government had allocated more funds to these areas."

In an answer to centrist deputy Mifleh Ruheimi, who complained about the "inefficient sewerage network in Jubeiha area," the minister said that the project to improve the system is underway. It is one of the important projects, he said, but funding faced problems.

Iraq starts oil exports

(Continued from page 1)

sell \$2 billion in oil for an initial 180 days. The intent is to ease the suffering of Iraqis whose access to affordable commodities had become increasingly limited, to the point where international aid agencies

have reported significant malnutrition and disease.

Trade Minister Mohammed Mehdi Saleh said agreements had been reached to import more food, and rations would be increased as soon as the supplies arrived, the Iraqi News Agency reported. The new monthly rations include nine kilograms of flour and 2.5 kilograms (5.5 pounds) of rice, the agency said. The previous rations were not given.

U.N. monitors are in place to oversee the oil exports and to ensure that the imports are fairly distributed.

The sanctions never barred the purchase of humanitarian commodities but the Iraqi government said it could not afford them without oil revenue — and its Western critics said it would not divert funds

from other purposes, such as rebuilding the armed forces, to pay for them.

The U.N. Security Council has made clear that sanctions will not be lifted completely until Iraq cooperates fully with weapons inspectors working to dismantle its programs for chemical and biological weapons and long-range missiles.

With the limited oil sales easing the hardship of the Iraqi people and taking some pressure off both the Iraqi leadership and the international community, there is the possibility of an impasse, with Iraq denying cooperation to the weapons inspectors and the West refusing to lift the sanctions.

The chief U.N. Arms monitor, Rolf Ekeus, was in Baghdad Wednesday but failed to persuade Iraq to release missile engines and parts for inspection.

"We agreed to disagree so we decided to freeze the important issue of missiles till the next visit" in February, Mr. Ekeus said. He met six times with Tariq Aziz, Iraq's deputy prime minister, after arriving Sunday.

Iraq claims it destroyed 85 missiles unilaterally in 1991 and buried the remains, which were unearthed last month. Mr. Ekeus wants to take the material abroad for analysis to determine whether the parts actually come from the long-range missiles. Iraq has resisted releasing the missile parts, saying it fears the results will be forged. Iraq last month prevented a team of U.N. arms inspectors

from moving the engines outside the country.

Asked how many more banned missiles the United Nations thought Iraq was still hiding, Mr. Ekeus told reporters: "It is a significant number that is not accounted for."

2 Israelis killed in W.Bank

(Continued from page 1)

finian men in a car bearing West bank licence plates opened fire with automatic weapons as they pulled up alongside the settlers' car outside this village north of Ramallah.

A police officer said the attackers arrived from the direction of Ramallah and after the shooting returned toward the town, which Israeli forces are barred from entering under the Oslo autonomy accords.

There were conflicting reports over the ages of the wounded, all residents of the Bet El settlement north of Surda. But they included four children aged four to 13, and a woman with three bullet wounds, Israel Radio reported.

The Israeli army and

police immediately sealed off the area of the attack at an intersection located three kilometres north of Ramallah.

"We view this murder with the utmost gravity," Mr. Netanyahu said from the southern town of Mitzpe Ramon where he was vacationing with his family.

"Israel will not remain silent. The Palestinian Authority has no right to give refuge to terrorists and child killers," he was quoted as saying by the radio.

But Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said Israeli security officials would work with their counterparts in Mr. Arafat's self-rule authority and not seek to enter Ramallah in pursuit of the attackers as demanded by settlers and

some right-wing politicians.

"We hope the Palestinian police will track down these terrorists," he said. "One very painful incident is not going to make us change our policy" of not entering the self-rule areas.

It was the first deadly attack against Israeli civilians since three people were killed in a similar drive-by ambush southwest of Jerusalem on July 26.

Wednesday's fatality brought to six the number of Israelis killed in attacks since Mr. Netanyahu came to office in June at the head of a right-wing government pledging to slow down the autonomy process in order to better safeguard Israel's security.

Arafat slams Israeli plans

(Continued from page 1)

approving the plan immediately so as not to worsen the crisis now gripping Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on implementation of the Oslo autonomy agreements.

Under the Oslo interim peace accords, Israelis and Palestinians agreed that the future of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the status of Jerusalem would be determined in negotiations on a

permanent settlement for the Palestinian areas.

After Tuesday's Israeli ruling, Palestinian officials warned that building the new neighbourhood could spark violent protests.

Faisal Hussein, the top Palestinian official in Jerusalem, said that if the decision is implemented "it would lead to an explosion" that "could demolish the entire peace process."

King receives conference delegates

(Continued from page 1)

continued service of the nation.

The audience was anend-

ed by Crown Prince Hassan, HRH Prince Hamzah, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabani, Royal Court Chief Awn Kha-

sawneh, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid and HRH Prince Ghazi Ben Muhammad, the King's cultural secretary.

Kazakhstan near deal on oil swaps with Iran — minister

ALMATY (R) — Kazakh Oil and Gas Minister Nurlan Balgimbayev said on Tuesday the former Soviet republic was close to signing an oil swaps deal with Iran to place up to six million tonnes of Kazakh oil a year at Iranian ports.

"We are sending a delegation to Tehran on Dec. 16," Mr. Balgimbayev told a news conference in the Kazakh capital Almaty.

"The agreement is almost achieved; there are only a few details left."

He said the deal would start with volumes of around two million tonnes

annually. "But volumes could increase to six million tonnes a year," the minister said.

Under the scheme, Kazakhstan would ship its oil across the Caspian Sea to Iran's Caspian Sea coast. In turn, Iran would make available an equivalent amount of crude at its Persian Gulf ports.

Observers have said the deal, under negotiation for several months, has been held up over differences on the quality of Kazakh crude.

The swaps are viewed with concern by the United States which, with many

U.S. oil majors investing in the country, is opposed to strengthening of ties between the Central Asian republics and Iran. Washington accuses Tehran of sponsoring terrorism and has imposed sanctions against Iran.


Kazakhstan is anxious to break its reliance on neighbouring Russia to the north for oil exports.

Russia has so far provided limited capacity in its own pipeline network for Kazakh oil exports which are set to soar in the next decade.

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WTO close to agreement on critical issues — Canada

SINGAPORE (R) — Most critical issues at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting here are near resolution, but still require some more time to settle, trade giant Canada said on Wednesday.

Trade ministers from 128 countries are meeting in Singapore this week to set the course on issues affecting business and jobs around the world.

"I think matters are developing well today," Canadian Trade Minister Art Eggleton told reporters, "the final day in terms of getting these issues settled? Probably not."

He said discussions would probably go on to Thursday, "but I think we're well on the way."

One key issue for Canada is an Information Technology Agreement (ITA). The ITA aims for elimination of tariffs in the lucrative and fast-growing world info-tech market, estimated at some \$600 billion annually.

"I think that's coming together rather well. We, of course, are looking for an objective of 90 per cent of world trade" in info-tech being covered by countries accepting an ITA, "and I think we're well on our way to seeing that achieved," Mr. Eggleton said.

In some other areas where moves toward liberalisation are being sought, he said remaining differences among negotiating countries were minor. "I think most of the substantive concerns in working for areas like investment (and) competition policy and government procurement to a great extent are done."

But the question of linking trade and international labour standards remained a problem, Mr. Eggleton said.

"That is the most contentious, the most difficult one."

The United States is pushing hard to use international trade rules to raise Third World labour standards, eradicate sweat shops and stop an estimated 250 million children working.

But many developing countries say the issue is a protectionist ploy and argue both their economies and their workers would be worse off with such rules. Some say even a mention of the subject in the WTO's final declaration would be out of place.

"We still have a lot of countries that don't feel it should be in there at all," Mr. Eggleton said. Negotiators are still "trying to see if we can get to some common ground."

He said another subject that has seen divergent positions, agriculture, was not discussed on Wednesday.

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation representing Moody's, the international credit agency, yesterday concluded a two-day visit to Jordan during which it held talks with Jordanian officials on various economic developments witnessed in Jordan in last year.

Jordan received in 1995 a rating for its creditworthiness from Moody's as well as Standard of Poor — both independent international credit rating agencies. This was within the framework of a policy adopted by the Jordanian government to make the overall investment climate in Jordan an attractive one, and enable its economy to become competitive in the global markets.

However, the visit by Moody's delegation is in line with the agency's policy of paying annual visits to countries that they rated, in order to follow up on issues related to the economic development policies in these countries for the sake of evaluating the assigned ratings.

The delegation met with the minister of finance, the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Jordan, the secretary general of the Ministry of Planning, the secretary general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the deputy director general of the Amman Financial Market and representatives of the private sector in Jordan.

Team representing international credit agency concludes visit

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Talk over with close friends today what your mutual wishes are and plan how best to gain them by a combined effort. Later this evening will be good for consulting with fellow associates and develop a plan of action.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get your surroundings in better order today and you can become more proficient at your career activities. Later this evening make the effort to get out of town with your loved ones and have some fun together.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Study your home well today and know how to improve it, so that everyone under your roof will feel warm and pleasant living there. Get a lot done later this evening by combining efforts with close friends.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) If you want to have recreation today let it be within your home and entertain nicely there, so that everyone who comes in will feel welcome. Later this evening you can get together with close friends and enjoy yourselves.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Add something cheerful and complimentary to any correspondence you send out today and this will make a good first impression upon the recipient. Keep your spirits high later this evening by being with your loved ones at home.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Get your possessions improved today and impress others favourably by making others feel more at ease in your residence. Plan to have more harmony with fellow associates and you will generate greater appreciation.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Know what your personal desires are today and go after them with full force, thereby making a bigwig respond favourably. Get into activities with your friends later this evening which are profitable and prosperous.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Be more affectionate today with your relatives and your mate and be happier together. Rest and relax in your home later this evening, since the next could be quite hectic and you want to be prepared for every possible condition.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Discuss plans for trips and jaunts with others and you will have a wonderful time together. Solve a difficulty by making a necessary revision of your course of action and thereby you can become quite successful.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) See bigwigs today who would be willing to go along with your plans for completing of your career activities. Be happy with the one you love and do something special for him or her which will be very much appreciated.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get the aid of a good friend today who can introduce you to persons you admire as a distance and know them better so that you can gain the advice you could use. Later this evening, go out on the town with your loved ones.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Study the promises you have made today and make sure you are keeping them to the best of your ability so that you won't lose face with others. Later tonight you can meet with knowledgeable people.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Study your status in the outside world today and plan how to improve it with whatever details you will need to apply. You can make the days ahead brighter for your loved ones through the efforts which you expend.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Add more charm and beauty today in both your career activities and your environment so that you can make all of your efforts more successful. People cooperate if you wear a smile, so give them a happy grin whenever possible.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Get into the amusements you like the most today and have a happy time in the pursuit of these activities. Be careful in motion especially on the highway, thereby you can avoid getting into any difficulties with other people.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Do whatever will bring more harmony within your home today so that you can be happier there, especially with your loved ones around. Later this evening you can get together with fellow associates and devise a course of action.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Plan how to have more harmony today with persons who are important in your daily routines for you to become quite successful. Make important visit to see those people whom you have not encountered for sometime.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Make the right financial contact today and improve your monetary status so that you can have extra funds for a rainy day. Dress nicely for best result in your career activities, since someone who look successful will be successful.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You are charming and dynamic today, so see as many persons as you can to assist you in finding happiness, whether it be in business activities or your personal life. Later this evening will be good to go out on the town with your mate.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Show more affection for your mate today and be romantically happy by doing something special for him or her. Go after data later this evening you need for success and you will gain it through the efforts of a bigwig.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Take time away from practical matters today and enjoy the company good friends to relieve tension and relax from all of your stressful business activities. This evening will be good to meet with good friends for some fun.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Keep busy today at improving your prestige and credit and thereby you will gain the recognition you see from those in authority. A kind person of importance gives you added support for completing any project which is current.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Find the right way today to entertain persons you like and make your efforts more productive. Plan a trip which has long been on your mind and determine the best method of operation to make it successful.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Try to be with the personalities you like and maintain a good rapport with them. Make your relationship more romantic with your mate by showing him or her some extra affection or doing something special which is appreciated.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAO	ITL	NUE	FRF
US Dollar	1.5406	0.6042	1.3120	112.85	1.3623	1525.97	1.7297	5.2197	
OE Mark	0.6491		0.3917	0.8521	73.21	0.8637	968.54	1.1221	3.3986
GB Sterling	1.6552	2.5501		2.1722	186.79	2.2548	2524.12	2.8610	6.6355
CH Franc	0.7822	117.33	0.4599		85.81	1.0374	1181.11	131.64	3.8732
JP Yen	0.0089	1.3638	0.5345	1.1618		1.2058	13.50	152.96	4.6175
CA Dollar	0.7341	1.1342	0.4438	0.8586	1.21		1124.34	1.2716	3.6425
IT Lira	0.0007	1.0092	0.3956	0.0860	1352.61	0.8924		11.32	3.4175
NL Guilder	0.5761	69.07	0.3492	75.91	65.27	0.7877	881.61		3.0165
FR Franc	0.1918	0.2953	0.1157	25.1485	21.62	0.2611	33.13	33.1300	

Energy	Last	Previous
Brent	23.65	24.25
W. Texas	23.95	24.20
Bony	23.65	24.25
Dubai	21.20	22.00
UL Gas	210.00	210.00

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2668	0.4108	0.1611	0.35816	30.1258
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4198	0.16452	0.35758	30.7636
KW Dinar	3.3372	5.1418	2.01613	4.38212	377.074
BF Dinar	0.3770	4.0831	1.60266	3.48111	299.67
CY Pound	2.1352	3.29	1.2895	2.8022	241.055

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	368.1	366.6
Silver (oz's)	4.78	4.8
Platinum (oz's)	367.05	368.05
AL (3 Months)	1514	1515
CU (3 Months)	2163	2165
Zinc (3 Months)	1049	1050
Lead (3 Months)	679	680
NI (3 Months)	6780	6770

Period	1 -	3 -	6 -	9 -	1 -
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.46	5.44	5.46	5.54	5.81
GBP	6.25	6.28	6.43	6.50	6.82
JPY	0.46	0.27	0.46	0.39	0.40
DEM	3.06	3.10	3.10	3.00	3.06
FRF	3.32	3.36	3.40	3.38	3.42
CHF	1.93	1.87	1.87	1.96	1.93
ITL	7.85	7.24	6.85	6.82	6.55

Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pc Ch.
New York	DOW JONES	6404.82	-58.43	-1.08	6472.87	6378.37	6473.25
New York	S&P 500	740.92	-6.82	-0.89	747.54	738.75	747.54
London	FT-SE 100	3984.8	-50.8	-1.26	4008.6	3983.8	4035.7
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	20568.38	-253.74	-1.22	20755.7	20466.7	20822.1
Paris	CAC 40	2218.75	-32.85	-1.45	2238.27	2202.51	2251.4
Frankfurt	DAX	2841.05	-49.95	-1.73	2853.88	2839.12	2891

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lb)	113.42	Spot
Cocoa (S/ton)	1367	Spot
Sugar (S/ton)	302	Spot
Wheat (S/ton)	121	Spot
Soya (c/lb)	21.55	Spot
Tea (c/g/kg)	123	Spot
Barley (S/ton)	2.18	Spot
Rice (S/ton)	470	Spot

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.706	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1899	1.1757
DE Mark	0.4589	0.4592
CH Franc	0.8339	0.8356
FR Franc	0.135	0.1357
JP Yen	0.634	0.6271
NL Guilder	0.4076	0.4096
IT Lira	0.4829	0.4852

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

1 Cold cuts shop

5 Site of Napoleon's victory

9 Innocent one

13 Certain school collar

14 Lulu

15 Carl of "Nova"

16 Leprechaun's land

17 Golfers' gp.

18 Madrid museum

19 MAKE UP

22 Lugs

23 Four-in-hand

24 Moon goddess

27 Pure

31 African antelope

32 Euro-Asian mountains

34 No longer working; abbr.

35 MAKEUP

39 Dined

40 Coward

41 First name in PLO

42 Some occupants

45 Avar without confirmation

46 Literary collection

47 Oreg. neighbor

49 MAKEUP

56 Of age

57 Self: pref.

58 Dies —

59 Street entertainment

60 Interpretation for one's cause

61 Twist's word

62 Gave the once-over

63 Lean toward

64 Remnants

DOWN

1 Roe or doe

2 Reason d—

3 "— and Clark"

4 Court plea

5 Art museum

6 Start

7 Painter of ballerinas

8 Oil producer

9 Beer holder

10 Chinese isinglass

11 Ordered

12 Organic compound

15 Plain rain locale?

20 Touches down

21 Practical, old style

24 Calyx part

25 Gladden

26 — and penates

27 Comedian Mort

28 Irregularly notched

29 Happy, in Hamburg

30 Woodpile measure

32 Eerie sightings

33 Hwy.

36 Tatum or Ryan

37 Author Elinor

38 Certain intermission

43 Left port

44 Related maternally

45 Nut

47 Rumble seat

48 Gomez Addams vehicle

49 Cab client

50 Forever and —

51 Preserve meal

52 Broken bone

53 Golf club

54 Wag

55 Observes

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon.

Daily Beat

A review news from the Arabic press

Industrialists emphasise quality of Jordanian pharmaceuticals

**** INDUSTRIALISTS HAVE** defied the quality of Jordanian pharmaceuticals in the face of statements by Iraqi Minister of Trade Mohammad Mahdi Saleh who called for upgrading some pharmaceutical products. The chairman of the board of directors of the Arab Centre for Pharmaceutical and Chemical Industries Company, Wasef Azar, said Mr. Saleh was attempting through his statements to up Jordanian industrialists to offer competitive prices when applying for Iraqi supply tenders. Mr. Azar stressed that Jordanian pharmaceutical products are of high quality and that their prices are competitive. He called on the private and public sectors to pool their efforts in supporting attempts by Jordanian industrialists to increase their share in the Iraqi market, saying this would serve the interests of the national economy.

Director General of Dar Al Dawia Development and Investment Company Mohammad Fattani also emphasised the distinction of Jordanian pharmaceuticals, saying they conform to the highest international standards.

These products, Mr. Fattani said, undergo all necessary lab tests at factories and by the Ministry of Health. Medicines exported to Iraq are also tested by the Iraqi Medicine Imports Corporation. These tests have always proved that these products are in conformity to international standards. Mr. Fattani remarked that it is difficult to defeat the competitive prices of Jordanian products in Iraq, where they are sold at prices cheaper than those in Jordan. According to Mr. Fattani, Jordan boasts more than 67 medical and pharmaceutical companies. Pharmaceuticals are considered of the pioneering industries in Jordan, attracting more than \$120 million in foreign currencies to the Kingdom annually (Al Aswaq).

Industries constitute 60% of GNP

**** THE JORDANIAN** industrial sector contributes about 60 per cent of the gross national product (GNP) and employs 20 per cent of the Kingdom's workforce, according to the president of the Sahab Industrial City Investors Society, Jamil Jubran. Mr. Jubran said the sector has achieved great strides which can be considered remarkable at the level of a Third World country. Industrial exports, he said, constitute 90 per cent of the Kingdom's overall exports (Al Aswaq).

Software companies offer Arabic translation

DAMASCUS (R) — Two software companies said on Wednesday they were negotiating to provide Internet providers with automatic Arabic translation software. "We are now negotiating with the Internet to give it our software package that allows automatic translation of Arabic, English, French and German. We hope to have an agreement in 1997," Ahmad Azzedine, managing director of Paris-based Cimos Company said.

He told Reuters in an interview the multi-lingual translation software was designed as a tool to help translators and "not to replace a skilled human translator." Omar Abdulhak, director of another Paris-based company Systran SA, said his firm was also contacting Internet providers for the same purpose and hoped to get his automatic translation system on the net during the first half of next year. "Our engineers are now working to put the automatic translator into Internet and it might be ready during the first half of 1997," Abdulhak said.

Mediterranean bankers to hold first forum in Tunis

TUNIS (R) — More than 200 bankers and financial experts are expected to participate in a conference in Tunis on Thursday to discuss financing investment and trade in the Mediterranean countries, officials said on Wednesday. The two-day "first European-Mediterranean banking forum" is organised by the Club Financier Méditerranéen (CFM) with the support of the European Commission.

CFM's President Pierre Habib-Delencle, who is also chairman of France's Societe Marseillaise de Credit, told journalists that the forum will focus on discussing investment risks in an attempt to boost investments in the southern Mediterranean countries. He said he expects the forum to help establish a permanent network between the region's banks and to identify measures to harmonise and secure financial business as part of efforts to establish an Euro-Mediterranean free-trade zone. Speakers will include Tunisian Finance Minister Nouri Zogbi, EU officials, and bankers from Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, France, Spain, and Italy.

UAE banks seen facing project finance challenge

DUBAI (R) — Long-term project financing may be the emerging trend in the booming UAE, but local banks will probably miss out on being key financiers to some \$16 billion worth of planned ventures, analysts said on Wednesday.

"Local banks are flush with liquidity, but they are at the short-term lending end of the market... They are more into trade and personal finance," said one banker.

Analysts expect United Arab Emirates financing requirements for private and joint public-private sector projects in the next five years to exceed 60 billion dirhams (\$16 billion).

Among projects on the agenda is a \$3 billion free-trade zone in Abu Dhabi, a \$12 billion five-year development plan in Dubai, and a number of other schemes

including two private industrial estates and a petroleum products manufacturing plant.

Officials have said they expect most of the financing to come from the private sector and foreign firms, some with the backing of foreign banks.

The UAE, with an OPEC quota of 2.161 million barrels a day, is keen to diversify its economy from oil and lure foreign investors and private capital into its economy.

Gulf-based economists said local banks have sufficient means to fund the upcoming ventures, but competition and regulations could make penetrating the project financing market rough.

One obstacle is the increase in foreign partnerships and the proliferation of high-profile international

financial institutions loaded with expertise in large-scale financing.

There are 27 foreign banks, 15 representative offices and 19 local banks operating in the UAE.

Another hurdle comes from cash-flush bank depositors.

"The most serious challenge comes from depositors. They would want a piece of the investment cake and they are financially capable of getting it," said a Dubai-based banker.

"This could result in a migration of funds from fixed-term deposits in banks to shares, land or equipment, and in an uneven distribution of funds among banks," he added.

Bankers said that moving funds from fixed deposits into projects could deplete the liquidity of banks used

to large deposits. They say a 380 million dirham public offering in September is an example of the dilemma they could face.

The issue by a new insurance company, which was 13 times oversubscribed, led to a cash squeeze at some banks and a glut at the bank managing the subscription.

Central bank rules also limit banks' exposure. In 1994 the ceiling on a bank's loans to a single private institution or borrower was set at seven per cent of capital — a move which prompted most local banks to increase their capital.

"An expansion into large-scale financing would mean another wave of capital increases," said one banker. (\$1=3.67 dirhams)

Noor Al Hussein Foundation
The National Music Conservatory
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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon

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Answer: What the bratty kids left the neighbor longing for - PEST CONTROL

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Jordan to host Women's Asian Handball Championship

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Handball Federation (JHF) announced that four teams had so far confirmed their participation in the 6th Asian Handball Championship for Women expected to take place here in May 1997.

President of the Jordan Handball Federation Sari Hamdan Tuesday told the Jordan Times that the federation is waiting for the "go ahead" from the Ministry of Youth to host the championship.

"This championship is an important event for us and we are waiting for the final approval," Dr. Hamdan said.

Four Asian countries have seriously shown their willingness to compete: South Korea, China, Taiwan and Kazakhstan.

However, Dr. Hamdan

said that Jordan's team is not ready to take part in the championship.

"Our team is not yet ready to compete against these teams because they are considered the best in the world," he said. "They are well-trained, organised, and well financed," he added.

"Jordan's players still need the experience, and the support to enable them to reach a competitive level," he continued.

Following the 1996 Women's Handball Championship currently underway, the JHF will name the players who will have an extensive training programme to represent Jordan in this championship.

Many snags hinder the better preparation of the national team including the lack of financial support and the absence of a full time coach. There is an urgent need to have more

women's teams competing as there are only three teams currently taking part in the women's handball league: Al Ahli, Al Orthodoxi and Kufroun.

Although the number of teams is limited, the mere fact that the women's competition is back on the scene an important step for the game after a long absence.

"Those teams have a lot of good players like Suhad Haddad and Abeer Obeidat who need to be supported and properly trained to take them to an acceptable level of competition," Dr. Hamdan added.

Meanwhile, the Women's Handball Championship reached its end after a heated competition between Al Orthodoxi and Kufroun who will play the final match.

The final match was postponed because of the university exams.

Alphand under double pressure at home

VAL D'ISERE, France (R)

World Cup downhill champion Luc Alphand will be under intense pressure this weekend when he starts his bid for a third successive title on home snow in Val D'Isere.

The 31-year-old Frenchman and other speed specialists have good reasons to feel fidgety, having made abortive journeys to the United States earlier this month when the scheduled opening downhill and Super-G fell victim to heavy snow falls.

The rescheduling makes the Val D'Isere race even more significant for Alphand who triumphed here last year to become the first Frenchman to win a World Cup downhill in the Savoy resort.

World Cup leader Katja Seizinger of Germany has even more to defend, having won the three races held last season in Val D'Isere — one downhill and three Super-G's.

Women lead the way in four days of racing in the French Alps with a downhill and a Super-G, the men following over the weekend in the same events.

Ahli take on Orthodoxi while Jalil host Jazireh in Irbid

Women's All-Star tourney concludes as national team members selected

By Aileen Bannayon
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The First Division Basketball Championship playoffs reach their halfway point Thursday evening with two exciting matches in Irbid and Amman.

Al Jalil host Al Jazireh hoping to score their first win. They might, however, have a hard time trying to do that as they face the high morale of Al Jazireh's players after strong showings in which they beat former champions Al Ahli 68-55 and lost to Al Orthodoxi 73-71 in the final minute.

Al Jazireh had defeated Al Jalil 66-61 in the preliminary round. If they repeat that tonight they will take second place in the standings for now, provided Al Orthodoxi beat Al Ahli in the other match.

The traditional Ahli-Orthodoxi clash at Amman's Sports Palace no

longer enjoys the flair it used to provide to fans of the game. However, it is still a highly awaited match taking into account the decades-long rivalry of both teams who have dominated Jordanian basketball for the past forty years.

Al Orthodoxi were impressive in their first-round 83-63 win over Al Ahli in the preliminary round.

The titleholders are the only team to have maintained an unbeaten record in the competition and have won both their playoff matches over Al Jazireh and Al Jalil.

Although they lead the standings going into Thursday's match, Al Orthodoxi barely beat Al Jazireh and most players appeared well below their form apart from Hilal Barakat, Fadi Saqq and Naser Bassam.

Informed sources said playmaker Jihad Saliba, currently studying in the

Team	P	W	L	SF	SA	Pts
Orthodoxi	2	2	-	151	130	4
Ahli	2	1	1	139	129	3
Jazireh	2	1	1	139	128	3
Jalil	2	-	2	120	162	2

United States, might join his team in the second round of the playoffs.

If Al Orthodoxi meet expectations and beat Al Ahli, they will top the standings and go a long way towards retaining their title.

Al Ahli's loss will drop them to third for the first time in their history as they now seem but a fraction of the team that ended Al Orthodoxi's 1976-1989 reign to win the championship in 90, 92, 93 and 94.

The Ahli-Orthodoxi will be preceded by the final match of the women's All-Star tourney in which over

25 players took part.

The Jordan Basketball Federation was expected to name the final 15 players who will be preparing to take part in the 17th Asian Women's Championship which opens in Bangkok, Thailand April 27, 1997.

The players were divided into two teams bearing the names of their sponsors — Babiche and Today.

The Babiche team won both previous matches 46-31 and 54-45 with players showing an improved form especially Rana Hussein, Hala Muheisen, Luma Abu Judum and Ruwa Hijazi.

National Rally takes place Friday

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The season-ending Jordan National Rally kicks off Friday with only 12 cars participating in the event organised by the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ).

The rally consists of three special stages covering the distance of 88 kilometres, passing through Daba'a, Khan Zuhir and Swaga.

Marouf Abu Samra, who has already secured first place in the 1996 Drivers' Open championship, will not be taking part.

Heated competition is expected between the two brothers, Ahmad and Mohammad Dawood, who will compete for the first place in the rally.

They will be up against serious competition from Faris Bustami who is well-known for his attentive driving and skill.

The 1995 Driver's Open champion Ahmad Dawood will have to win the National Rally to secure the second place in the 1996 season.

RACJ finished the technical test of participating cars which will start Friday at 9.30 a.m.

A prize winning ceremony will be held on Saturday at RACJ headquarters.

Iran reaches Asian Cup quarters

DUBAI (AFP) — Iran

marched into the quarter-finals of the Asian Cup Wednesday when they crushed tournament favourites Saudi Arabia 3-0 in their final Group B match.

It was a must win match for the Iranians and they secured the perfect start with an 11th minute goal.

A Khodadad Azizi shot was half cleared by the Saudi defence and Karim Bagheri, lurking on the edge of the area, drove the loose ball past a helpless Mohamed Al-Daeyea.

It was the first goal of the tournament conceded by Al-Daeyea but it was not going to be the last as Iran drove forward — Naeim Sadavi causing all sorts of

problems in the Saudi defence with his runs down the right side from deep inside his own half.

The shaky Saudi defence managed to weather the storm until the 36th minute when winger Ali Reza Mansourian managed to take the ball to the byline before turning it back to Azizi.

Azizi slipped the ball to the unmarked Ali Daei who made no mistake.

The stunned Saudis tried to come back but the momentum was in Iran's favour.

The Saudis, who have already clinched the group, did not share the hunger of the Iranians who played like men prepared to die if necessary.

Their ferocious determination was underlined by daei who left the field in the final minutes of the first-half to be treated. His strikes — applied to a head wound following Iran's hitler match against Iraq at the weekend — burst open.

Blood streaming from his head, the Iranian trainers quickly bandaged his head and sent him back on again.

Saudi hopes of getting their act together in the second half lasted all of two minutes — that was how long it took Iran to make it 3-0 and put the result beyond doubt.

It was a brilliant individual effort by Azizi who jinxed past three Saudi defenders before coolly slotting the ball

past Al-Daeyea.

It was a stunning performance by a team who only last week were in revolt with trainer Hassan Jahnpour.

The team threatened to go on strike after Jahnpour insisted on a full training schedule at mid-day in the blazing sunshine.

Peace was finally restored but Jahnpour's reign is not likely to last much longer, despite the sides win over Saudi Arabia.

At least one foreign coach here for the tournament has been approached about taking over the Iranian team.

For Saudi coach Eduardo Vinagda, it was just the sort of result he did not need before the quarter-finals this weekend.

Rockets edge Timberwolves; Spurs lose

MINNEAPOLIS (R) — Clyde Drexler scored a season-high 36 points, including a driving layup with 1.5 seconds left that gave the red-hot Houston Rockets their 12th win in 13 games, 96-94 over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Tuesday.

The Timberwolves had a chance to tie when Chris Carr took a lob pass and was fouled by Mario Elie with 0.2 seconds left.

But after a Houston timeout, Rockets forward Charles Barkley said something to rattle Carr, who was 7-of-11 from the line this season. Carr missed

the first shot and intentionally missed the second, but Minnesota could not tip in the miss and suffered its season-high fifth straight loss.

In Atlanta, Steve Smith's 15-foot jumper with 3.9 seconds remaining lifted the Atlanta Hawks to their seventh straight home win, an 89-88 decision over the reeling Denver Nuggets.

In Cleveland, Voshon Lenard's off-balance 15-foot banker as time expired gave the Miami Heat their ninth straight road victory, 76-74 over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

In Los Angeles, Chris Gatling had 30 points and seven rebounds as the Dallas Mavericks defeated the Los Angeles Clippers, 100-95 for a season-high three-game winning streak.

In Milwaukee, Joe Dumars scored seven of his 29 points in a key fourth-quarter run as the Detroit Pistons won their fifth straight game, 93-85 over the Milwaukee Bucks.

In New York, Buck Williams added a season-high 15 rebounds as the New York Knicks beat the Washington Bullets 85-73.

In Phoenix, Wesley Per-

son scored 11 of his career-high 29 points in the decisive third quarter to lead the revitalised Phoenix Suns to a 93-76 victory over the reeling San Antonio Spurs, spoiling the coaching debut of Gregg Popovich and the return of David Robinson.

In Portland, the Orlando Magic, bolstered by the return of Penny Hardaway beat the Portland Trail Blazers 99-93.

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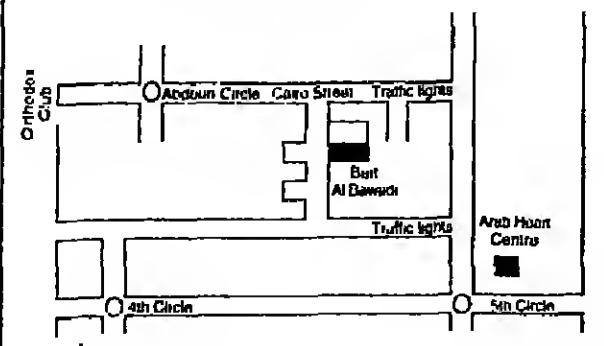
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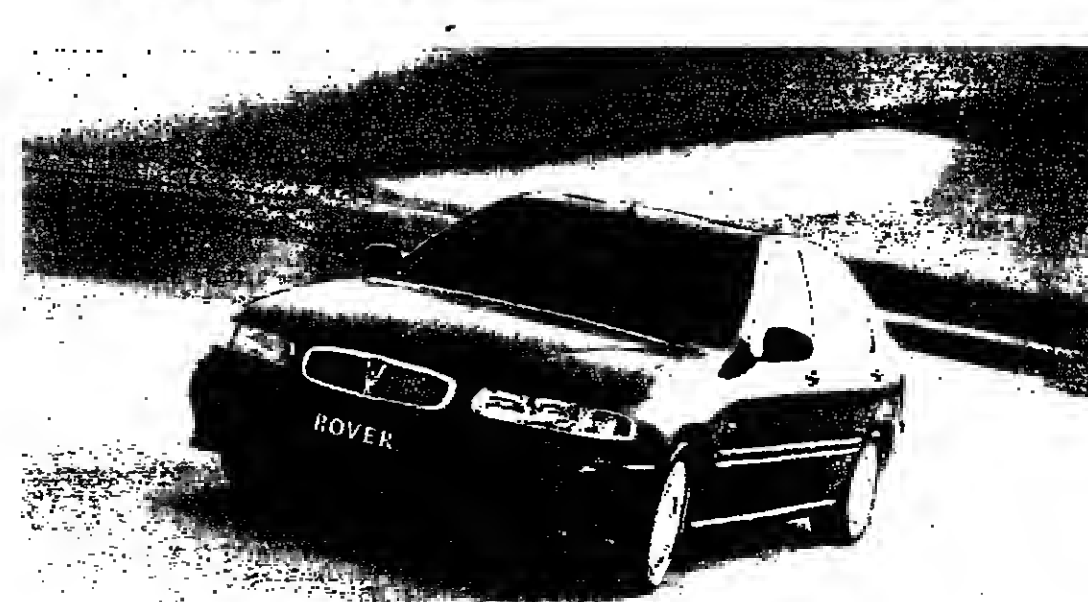


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CAHORS (AFP) — Firemen, alerted by a phonecall, rushed to the scene of a supposed fire Tuesday in Cahors, southern France — only to find that a household car had punched their number. The car had accidentally punched 18 on the phone, the fire brigade said. An emergency service operator took the call early Tuesday but all he got was a mewing sound. He then tried the caller's number several times, but the line was busy. Firemen rushed to the village of Saint Pantaleon and broke down the door of an apartment — where they found their mystery caller, mewing next to the telephone.

PAUL (R) — A wealthy dentist and members of his family charged with buying luxury items from a hired copliifter were ordered to stand trial in the case. Gregory Dick, 58, his wife Judy, 56 and son James, 32, were released without bond after appearing in Ramsey county district court where they did not enter a plea. Trial was set for Jan. 9. A daughter, also charged, will be arraigned later. Neither the family nor their lawyer made any public comment. The family was charged last week with receiving more than a \$250,000 in stolen goods in recent years, including Armani suits, polo sweaters and waterford crystal. Police went to the family's \$450,000 home after arranging a "sting" operation with suspected copliifter Gregory Thomas, 37, who had been caught earlier in a department store. Thomas gave the family \$6,000 worth of goods from the store for which they paid him \$800 in cash, police said.

alight on stage before the crowd, made up mostly of